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STARLOG PRESENTS

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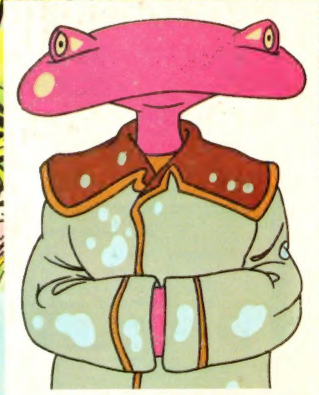

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STARLOG PRESENTS

# COMICS Scene

ISSUE #5
SEPTEMBER

**WORD BALOONS**
Animation, the summer and rabbits ..... 4

**LETTERING**
Real fan letters this time ..... 6

**COMICS REPORTER**
New ideas and new titles ..... 10

**FOCUS**
Meet scripter Alan Brennert ..... 18

**CONTEST**
Win *Creepshow* books, posters or t-shirts! ..... 20

**LOOSE CRUSE**
Howard in praise of ducks ..... 22

**AROUND THE WORLD**
A new animated Moebius movie ..... 25

**GUEST SPOT**
Redefining undergrounds with Denis Kitchen ... 30

**BURNE HOGARTH**
Dynamic anatomy and a wonderful career ..... 32

**CLASSIFIED ADS** ..... 39

**PANELS AND FRAMES**
Translating movies into comics ..... 41

**HERBIE**
Read this or we'll bop you with our lollypop ... 48

**JIM APARO**
THE Batman Artist ..... 50

**CREATING THE COMICS**
Beginning a special series on inking ..... 56

**GENE COLAN Part Two**
From Marvel to DC and more ..... 61

**ED. NOTES**
And now a word from our fearless leader ..... 66

KERRY O'QUINN & NORMAN JACOBS, **Publishers;** RITA EISENSTEIN, **Associate Publisher**
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COMICS scene

Issue No. 5 September

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**Editor-in-Chief**
HOWARD ZIMMERMAN

**Editor**
ROBERT GREENBERGER

**Art Director**
STEVEN J. PLUNKETT

**Contributing Editors**
SUE ADAMO
DAVID HIRSCH
DAVID HUTCHISON

**Senior Designer**
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**Designers**
DIANE COOK
SHELLY MARKS
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**Editorial Coordinator**
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**Photography**
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**ABOUT THE COVER:** Tarzan steps through the luscious jungle foliage courtesy of master artist Burne Hogarth, our cover feature. Hogarth hand-colored the illustration which has previously appeared in his *Dynamic Light and Shade*. Turn to page 33 for an informal chat with Hogarth. Batman ® and © 1982 DC Comics Inc.; *Blade Runner* photo © 1982 Ladd Co.; *Time Masters* courtesy Anthony Clarke.

**Production Assistants:** Norma Garcia, Eileen Dempsey, Cindy Levine, Susan Oster, and Eddie Berganza as the Beaver.

**For Advertising Information:** Rita Eisenstein (212) 689-2830.

# Reviving Animation

Between now and Christmas, movie audiences will be treated to five brand new full-length animated movies plus a new 20-minute featurette from Walt Disney. The subject matter in three of the five involves anthropromorphic animals while the other two bring us humans from the late 1800s and tomorrow.

The production of such films as *Secret of NIMH, The Last Unicorn, Rock and Rule, Plague Dogs, Twice Upon a Time* and *Heidi's Song* shows us that people are still interested in animation despite limiting technology and lack of major studio interest. Times are changing, though, and now it appears that animated movies are becoming cheaper to produce than most features.

Since we have so much coming from so many people, it's safe to say that variety will be the operative word this season. We find it a refreshing change and hopefully a permanent one. In the past, new animation came either from Disney or Ralph Bakshi, or from independents like Sally Kruikshank. Now with Hanna Barbera, Nelvana and Don Bluth producing, we will all benefit as a result.

With luck, all this activity will employ many of the animators who lost jobs as a result of Filmation's failure to sell more than one new series to the networks for Saturday morning. It also may create a competitive atmosphere and thus improve the level of animation. After the disappointments of both *American Pop* and *Heavy Metal* last year, and the continuing decline of Saturday morning television, we need a recommitment to superior animation. From what we've seen of both *NIMH* and *R&R* (as we write this in May), it's clear that at least a few people are making that commitment.

Unfortunately, this situation seems limited to the movie theaters. The TV networks don't seem interested in paying enough money for quality animation for their Saturday schedules, so we're forced to suffer through limited animation, unretouched xeroxed backgrounds, and shoddy work being done overseas. While Marvel's *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends* arguably has the best animation on TV today, it's still a far cry from the best of Warner Bros., Walter Lantz and MGM.

With slipping ratings and declining audiences, the networks may be forced to pay for better quality programming or they will irreplaceably lose the young watchers to home video games, cable programming or even good books. The decline is on and the end is rapidly approaching, but will the networks react in time? Probably not.

Ever wonder why editors sound harried and half-crazed? Perfect example happened the other day: I sat down with Rita Eisenstein to place some ads for this issue and discovered more ads than pages allotted so it came down to one of those decisions that keep one up at night—what gets dropped? Flipping through the issue should tell you that our long-awaited *Crusader Rabbit* story got bumped. I apologize to both Fred Patten and the general audience. You have my word it will be here next time.

With summer here, there is an unusually high number of things to choose on the entertainment front. As usual there are the blockbuster movies to thrill and delight even the most jaded audiences—and of course there are the annual conventions in New York, Chicago and San Diego. Even Marvel and DC are in the act with annuals and specials galore. But also available this summer will be the first issues of almost a dozen new small press projects. We've reported on many of them in previous issues or this issue's news section. We can't encourage you enough to travel to a nearby convention or comics shop to sample these wares.

We're not saying they're all for you but surely, *something* will strike your fancy. It's a rich time to be a comics collector—all you have to do is open your eyes and try something new. Happy reading!

—Robert Greenberger

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# Lettering

## Wow!

The mail response has been just wonderful. Trust us, we read each and every letter that comes into the offices and we're getting a much better idea of what you want to read about every other month. Keep on telling us when we please you and when we goof up. Again, we can't respond personally but don't let that stop you from sending your letters to:

Lettering
COMICS SCENE
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

## In General

First off, some corrections and comments. Thanks for pointing out all our typos. We're working harder on correcting this problem.

The illustration on page 39 last issue should have had the following copyright notice: ART © 1982 Jack and Carolyn Katz.

Also, many readers have asked us about including coming comics checklists. Frankly, our bi-monthly schedule prevents us from having the last minute changes that frequently happen in the business. Besides, several other comics magazines already run the service and we recommend you look to them for that information.

Finally, many of you have wondered about our going monthly. While we've gotten off to a good start, we have no plans to increase our frequency just yet. The very thought has Howard looking in the mirror for more gray hairs and Bob thinking about his ulcer. When enough of you buy the magazine, then maybe we'll produce more.

## Interfan Experience

. . . In retrospect, I'm very proud of my association with Steve Clement and Interfan, because the experience I gained helped me grow both as an artist and an individual. It also allowed me to collaborate with such people as Bob Clements and artists such as Mike Machlan and Peter Iro (who did the recent Thunderbunny story in *Charlton Bullseye!*, John Beatty, Bill "Mac" Patterson, Doug Herring, Peter Botsis, Karl Kesel and others. I was also honored to have artwork of mine critiqued by Joe Sinnott and Jim Shooter in August of 1975. They were very kind and fair to me and you can imagine the thrill it would be to a 17-year-old aspiring artist.

You know, as head honcho of Interfan, Steve suffered for its failures *more* than the rest of us. Many of us tired of the big plans that never got off the ground and eventually lost touch with Steve, so he not only suffered through Interfan's failures, but I think felt we held it against *him*. That's a very sad situation, because we really owe him a lot. He *tried*, and that's really all you can ask of someone. He devoted a lot of time and talent to something he believed in, and by that measure Interfan was, and is, a tremendous success.

On a final note, it was not mentioned that this past summer Steve Clement took his own life. This letter is a tribute to a man I thought of as a friend.

Jerry Ordway

*Sorry we had to edit your touching letter, Jerry, but thank you for another side of the Interfan story.*

Dear Robert:

I just wanted to write and thank you for the terrific article on Interfan that appeared in the third issue of COMICS SCENE. I have been literally swamped with letters from talented artists and writers wanting more information on the group. This one article could possibly double or even triple our membership!

The only problem I have is that with all this new, exciting talent joining our ranks, we will need more and more places to publish our material. I have only heard from two or three editors and publishers interested in Interfan work. We really need to hear from anybody out there in fandom who publishes a fanzine or is planning one. We can really help out! Within a couple week's time, I could put together enough material to fill at least 10 fanzines. Interfan wants to help fan publishers, for free!

Thanks again, and thanks to James Samuels for the fine article. Congratulations on a fine magazine as well. COMICS SCENE is something that has been needed in the field for a long time. Best of luck!

Jim Bertges
Editor, Interfan Productions
1332 Currant Ave.
Simi Valley, CA 93065

## The Fans of Osamu Tezuka

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . Your magazine is the best thing for collectors since *Action #1*!

My question is, did Tezuka have anything to do with two other programs that were on at the same time as *Astro-Boy*, namely, *Prince Planet* and *Eighth Man*? Of these three programs, are any of them still on and if so, where?

Alexander J. Bailey
5304 38th St. Apt. A
Lubrock, TX 79414

*As far as we know, none of the shows are currently running in the U.S. and Tezuka had nothing to do with the other shows although many of us fondly remember* Eighth Man. *Can anyone answer his question about availability?*

Dear Sirs,

. . . In responding to your article on Dr. Osamu Tezuka, he has spontaneous talent in his work or art. As I remember back in my early years as a tiny child, I have had constant reflections to watching *Astro-Boy* and *Kimba, the White Lion*. Still, I remember those cartoons from the 1960s.

Lindy Rosado
3403-14th Ave. #3E
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . No longer can I complain about your mag and its sister publications not running

articles on Japanese animation.

I really enjoyed part one of the Osamu Tezuka interview and I am impatiently awaiting part two. I saw *Phoenix 2772* at the 1980 San Diego Comic Con and it was great!!

Bob Johnson
1480 5th Avenue
Belmont, CA 94002

*Bob, if you liked the Japanese animation we recommend FANGORIA #8 which features an exclusive profile on* Force Five, *a collection of Japanese series placed under an umbrella title.*

Dear Bob,

. . . It was very gratifying to read Jim Wheelock's coverage of the achievements of Dr. Osamu Tezuka, running in issues #3 and #4. I've long collected Dr. Tezuka's books, having discovered them years ago during my overseas Naval tours. Though I can't read Japanese, his singular drawing style, cinematic lay-outs and imaginative plots remain more enjoyable than most Western visuals.

I had the extreme good fortune to see Dr. Tezuka in person *and* attend both showings of his masterful *Phoenix 2772* during the 1980 San Diego Comic Con. This feature finely illustrates the best potential of animation, showing human characters in scenes and actions impossible to duplicate in live film; and if it *should* ever be released on video tape (sub-titled or not) I'm definitely buying it! However, I'm primarily hoping that the exposure of this milestone effort through Jim's article will aid toward finally giving *Phoenix* the wide-spread American distribution it so richly deserves.

Mike Price
2027 Front St., Apt. #2
San Diego, CA 92101

## Well, Can He?

. . . Can Dick Tracy return to the comics in a title of his own? Will Marvel or DC give him a chance with his own book? Can Dick Tracy make it in the 1980s?

Well, I'd like to know. I feel that there are some people who would like to see the detective and his friends in a comic book format. With Gould, Fletcher and Collins handling the book, or someone else like Joe Staton and a Tracy-type writer, a book can get off the ground.

Lee Curiel
11038 E. Clare St.
Whittier, CA 90601

## Keeping Our Profiles

Dear COMICS SCENE,

. . . I am glad to finally see comics get their own magazine. What I am really writing about is the character profiles. I think they should be kept on. Even the characters I don't like very much are interesting when I read this, it also helps me appreciate the characters more. I suggest in future issues you do profiles on Iron Fist and Nightcrawler.

Chris Dyer
3493 Columbus Rd.
Canton, OH 44705

*Check out our nostalgia profile this issue on Herbie and you'll see that the profiles will remain a part of the magazine. Also, we're received enough mail to convince us to do an E-Man profile and, eventually, a Wolverine piece.*

E-MAN © 1982 JOE STATON & NICOLA CUTI

## Comments on No. 3

. . . I found it a real eye-opener: interview with Don Bluth and his upcoming movie and the old *Astro-Boy* TV series. I was wondering if you could do something on Ralph Bakshi. I would like to know more about the man and if he has anything cookin' on the burner for another movie.

I hope you will keep the policy of featuring animated features and movies in addition to your other categories.

Some people who will read this magazine are not "comic book addicts." They don't go around buying up every comic ever made. I found a few of the terms and slang used in the articles difficult, if not impossible, to decipher without a code book.

D.D. Ryder
Box 137
R.D. 1, Clairmont, NY 13622

*First, D.D., Bakshi and Frank Frazetta have cooked up an interesting-looking future world in* Fire and Ice. *The feature film was scripted by Roy Thomas and Garry Conway and should be out in 1983. We'll have more on that in a future issue as well as coverage of Heidi's Song from Hanna Barbera, Embassy's* Plague Dogs *and Nelvana's* Rock and Rule.

*I wish you could have mentioned the terms you found indecipherable. We try and make everything as clear as possible. If you readers tell us what terms you don't understand, maybe we can run a glossary in a future issue.*

. . . I have just finished reading the third issue of COMICS SCENE and must say that this issue has shown improvement on an already terrific magazine.

Why do I feel as though I'm actually a part of the comic industry after reading Comics Reporter? This column really highlighted this issue.

Sorry, but I just can't seem to get interested in Howard Cruse's articles. I'm by no means saying I don't like Howard Cruse himself. But this article seems kind of drab. Howard Cruse should think of a formula for his column, a style all its own.

"Lan Wein and Swamp Thing" was one of the best articles to see print in this magazine!

CHARACTER © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

GEE JAN, BRING AN AVENGER, SOUNDS LIKE IT'S GONNA BE LOTSA FUN!
TH-THE BIG GREEN GIRL GAVE HER ANYTHING SHE WANTS/EXTRA LARGE!
CHARACTER © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

The talk with Bob Layton was very informative so people don't pick up the *Herc* mini-series and say, "Huh?". This is one book I'll be saving my money for.

Rick Harvey
104 Pine Cone Tr.
Medford, NJ 08055

. . . The third issue is out and I'm looking forward to a long run for COMICS SCENE. If possible, please have Ron Goulart as a regular on comics and its histories. He can add so much with his background knowledge.

Mad Mona Muneco
P.O 9382
San Antonio, TX 78204

*All we can say, Mad Mona, is that Ron was in issue four and he should be back next issue with a look at the history of the* Captain Easy *strip.*

. . . I just wanted to write and say that I have really enjoyed the first three issues of COMICS SCENE and that if you keep having commentaries by Fred Hembeck, you will have one reader for life.

Bob Layton was stated as saying that he wants Hercules to get his *own* Slurpee cup. In 1975, 7-11 came out with a series of Slurpee cups and, in the series, one of them has Hercules on the front.

Dale Sherman
441 Faculty Dr.
Fairborn, OH 45324

*Fred missed out on this issue because of space problems but we promise he'll be back next issue with another full page commentary.*

*Bob received your photo of the Slurpee cup and mentions that other fans have shown him the cup too. Therefore, he reports that he is in the process of choosing another career goal. By the way, for the record, he always meant for Herc to be called a butthead, not budhead. Sorry about that, Bob.*

## Questions and Answers

. . . A few questions about the *Conan* article. The "storyboard" mentioned and glimpsed in the article was a welcome treat, especially on that splash page. Are duplicates available?

Jamie D. Shephard
3WC, 1240 Radio
Wilkesboro, NC

*As far as we can tell, no one is planning to publish William Stout's wonderful storyboards.*

Why not have an episode guide *a la* STARLOG in which selected cartoon series (i.e. *Spider-Man* and *Blackstar)* are outlined?

Gabriel Cabassa, Jr.
New York, NY

*We have the STARLOG Guidebook series with two volumes of TV Episode guides currently out. If those series will ever be done, they will turn up in a future volume. In fact, editor Dave Hirsch wants to do the Superman series from the 1950s in volume three, due in 1983.*

*Conan* is almost here. *Silver Surfer* will be here sooner or later. With all this happening, I was wondering if it's true that a live action *X-Men* film is really being discussed.

Donald Mauldin
410 36th Street NE
Birmingham, Al 35215

*Stan Lee reported in late March at Dimension Convention in New York that the rights to the* Silver Surfer *are once more up in the air. The entire mess with Lee Kramer has finally come to an end. We guess it's going to be a lot later before we see that film. Lee also said he would love to see the new and old X-Men in the live action movie being produced by Nelvana Productions. Jim Shooter reported in April that he watched the contract being signed and Chris Claremont has been signed on to help Nelvana plan the special-effects laden production.*

. . . Here's another idea: I think you should have a Quest-type page for aspiring young artists. You should also get a clearance from Marvel & DC so the artists can use their characters.

Tony Zallocco
2816 Kennewick P. NE
Renton, WA 98056

*Sigh . . . this is probably the single most asked-for feature in the magazine. But at the present time, with our bi-monthly frequency and two-man editorial staff, we must put off any plans for a readers' page. When we increase our frequency (From willing) we can consider the thought again.*

## Attention Gary Groth

To the Editor:
. . . What's this about an infamous Ellison interview in *TCJ*—what is *TCJ*?

William A. Day
27 Linden Street
Bangor, ME 04401

The Comics Journal *is one of the longest running fanzines around. It began as the* Nostalgia Journal *and "grew" up to become* TCJ. *Back in issue 53, Ellison spoke with the editors about any and everything and people have been talking about it ever since. In fact, people always have something to say about the magazine—most love it or hate it. You decide.*

## Gripes

Dear COMICS SCENE,
. . . Personally, I don't like the direct sales approach. They always say your subscriptions will be mailed flat, but that doesn't mean it will stay flat. Recently, a copy of the *Micronauts* which I had to subscribe to (thanks to Marvel's stupid direct sales approach) was delivered to me in horrendous condition. Their excuse was that it was sent to the wrong address. And, the mailman usually creases my books in order to fit them in my mailbox.

I hope the direct sales approach fails. I would much rather buy my books in a neighborhood store. At least you can make sure that you're buying a good copy of the book. I know you can buy these books in comic specialty shops but the nearest one in Arkansas is so far away even by car that a subscription is still the most viable solution. I paid $18 in all for my subscriptions to the *Micronauts* and *Moon Knight.* I think we fans deserve better treatment. Marvel could at least mail the books in sturdier packages

Marshall Oakley
Jacksonville, AK

To whom it may concern,
. . . I'm very displesed at the way prices have gone up with Marvel Comics. Fifty cents was an average price to pay. But now with the comics going up again I don't think me and my allowance can handle it.

This situation has come up with other collectors I do my trading with and they have stopped buying their comics. So as others have been doing I also have stopped buying Marvel Comics.

This letter may not mean anything to you but I had my say.

Ex-Marvel Fan
Craig M. Connelly

### Elf-Correction

Dear Bob,

. . . Thanks for the advance copies of COMICS SCENE #4, and thanks especially for the headline about *Elfquest*'s signing with Nelvana. The *EQ* animated feature film is a project that we are very excited about, and while production is only in the most embryonic stages, we're looking forward to working closely with Nelvana to make the film all that it can be.

We do wish to correct a significant error in the report, however. It is stated that the movie will be based on the first five issues of the *Elfquest* comic, when in fact it will be based on the entire *EQ* saga, all the way to issue #20, where we plan to conclude the present tale. Assuming no foul-ups, that issue will appear October, 1984, and the animated film should be ready for release shortly thereafter.

Richard & Wendy Pini

### Alcala, Art & the Duck

Dear Howard and Bob:

. . . Responding briefly to Roger Stern's uninformed speculation in your July letters column: inker Alfredo Alcala will indeed receive an equitable share of the original artwork from the upcoming *Destroyer Duck* series to be published by Eclipse Enterprises. Such will be affirmed in a written contract signed by me, by Jack Kirby, by the publisher, and, of course, by Alfredo himself.

Under this same agreement, Alfredo will also be entitled to royalties based upon the sales of the series and will receive a percentage interest in any merchandising of Destroyer Duck in media other than comic books.

As for the originals from *Destroyer Duck* #1, the lawsuit benefit issue, these may—at Kirby's suggestion, incidentally—be auctioned off, with the proceeds being divided among Kirby, Alcala, and the lawsuit. We haven't decided yet, but there is certainly no controversy among the three of us on this matter.

I'm sure Stern was only trying to champion the cause of downtrodden inkers the world over, But he will have to look somewhere other than Eclipse or *Destroyer Duck* to find anyone who needs his assistance. We're doing just fine, thank you, championing ourselves.

As regards Frank Miller's letter, and specifically his comment that that major comics publishers are now "struggling mightily" to provide "a more equitable arrangement" for creative people, I can only say that I am amused and astonished at Frank's naïveté.

The majors are now faced with serious competition for the first time in two decades. This situation has presented itself at a moment when the majors have alienated most of the important talent in the field, with the exception of a few rising young stars like Frank himself. What these corporate dinosaurs are "struggling mightily" to do is *compete*. And what they must overcome is not only the advent of the new independent publishers like Eclipse and Pacific Comics, but also the bad faith engendered by several decades of their own dubious business practices.

Frank Miller, Artist and Writer, is brilliant; but if Frank Miller, Businessman, truly believes that the publishers are "struggling mightily" against anything other than avarice and inertia, he's still terribly gullible. A few more years in the industry will undoubtedly remedy that.

COMICS SCENE, by the way, continues to improve with each new issue. I wish you much success and look forward to reading the publication for a long time to come.

Steve Gerber

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# Comics Reporter

INDEPENDENT PRESS

## *D'Arc Tangent* to Premiere This Summer

The story of *D'Arc Tangent* begins with two-time Hugo-winning cartoonist Phil Foglio. Six years ago Foglio came up with a sketch of a sword-wielding robot and then started asking himself how the robot came up with the sword. Now aided by writer/illustrator Freff, the adventures of *D'Arc Tangent* are ready to premiere.

Once Foglio began doing some serious thinking about the strip, he did up a 36-page strip to serve as the plot's backbone. Playboy Press was the only publisher interested in it and editor Sharon Jarvis told Foglio that if it was a prose novel, she would buy it. Keeping to his creative ideals, Foglio kept trying to sell it as a graphic novel. Starblaze, the company that published the highly-successful *Elfquest Book I* last year, was interested in the project but the financial arrangements were prohibitive.

While all this was going on, Freff and Foglio struck up a friendship and, when they moved near each other in Brooklyn, decided to do the project together. Freff explained that while Foglio had a cartoon style and he was a detailed artist, the two mesh together very easily.

Foglio and Freff have now formed their own publishing house, Ffantasy Ffactory, and their first project is the 16-issue *D'Arc Tangent*. The 48-page magazine will retail for $2 and each issue will contain a 40-page story. The remaining pages will include "creative material" including a wraparound cover and a single page feature, "Perils of Partnerships," wherein the two creators will take swipes at each other.

**Meet Kazzar, one very nasty alien. He's survived 80 million years and will come face to face with D'Arc Tangent.**

Freff said in May that the series is projected to appear on a quarterly schedule with the first issue set to premiere in July at Phil Seuling's annual Comic Art Convention. The magazine will be printed at the same plant that prints *Elfquest*. It will be a direct-only title and will be carefully cultivated by the duo. A stylish promotional package was mailed out in June, getting the direct sales distributors interested in the new project.

Foglio has worked at the Moebius Theather in Chicago along with being a respected cartoonist. He currently does a continuing strip in TSR's *Dragon* magazine. Freff, known for his highly imaginative "Godzilla carols," is a graduate of the Ringing Brothers' Clown College and has done comics work for Marvel, Gold Key and Atlas in addition to doing science fiction illustrations for magazines and books.

The story of *D'Arc Tangent* is a tightly-woven tale that begins some 80 million years ago when a race of lizard-like creatures owned one-sixth of the galaxy. Through bio-engineering they evolved themselves into a higher state of being, all save their military leader, Kazzor. He chose to remain in his natural state and continue the art of war, something his race chose to abandon.

Kazzor led his followers into a bloody civil war that they lost but Kazzor himself escaped through a singularity in the fabric of space, to apear in space at a later time.

With Machievellian planning, the evolved lizards set into motion events to anticipate the return of Kazzor. Many millions of years later, everything is about to come a head when a Krithian research ship begins exploring Earth. One of the exploratory robots, from the Arc Tangent series, becomes imprinted with the memories and emotions of Jacques Jean D'Arvieux, a 17th-century French nobleman. The robot spends much of the first issue in a confused state, trying to sort out its feelings.

Commanding the ship is Avari T, a Krithian who has just lost her bondmate and has a short time to find another before she slowly goes insane and dies.

Much of the story's action will take place inside The Wall, an enigmatic device dating before anyone's recorded history. It can sustain any lifeform and, although invisible at a distance, it becomes more solid and tangible as one approaches it. None have been known to go through it. Many cities and towns have sprouted on The Wall and Foglio promises to show us many kinds of alien life.

MARVEL COMICS

## EpicLine of Comic Books Announced

In May, Marvel Comics confirmed reports that they are planning a new line of comics. The Epic line, according to editor-in-chief Jim Shooter, is a natural copyright, royalties and other privileges already being granted through *Epic Illustrated* and the graphic novel series.

"It's as if it were a serialized graphic novel," Shooter commented. The package and details have not been finalized but Shooter pointed out that the entire line will be flexible. The most likely format will be 32 ad-free pages on the high quality baxter paper already used for *Star-Lord* and *G.I. Joe*.

Carol Kalish, manager of direct sales, added that a number of creators were reading over the contract and announcements would be forthcoming. Jim Starlin will be one of the contributors with two issues of a project already completed.

Kalish did hint that other publishing plans might give some indication of who was being attracted back to mainstream comics.

Kalish announced several reprint volumes, similar to last year's successful *Star-Lord*. The reprints will be released over the summer and continue through the fall; and where necessary, will be recolored.

# First Comics Announces Titles

**Late Flash: In addition to the above titles, First Comics will also premiere in December, *E-Man*. First purchased the rights from Charlton and gave them to Joe Staton who gave half the rights to his co-creator, Nicola Cuti.**

After more than a year of planning and preparation, what may be the most ambitious new comic book company in years is planning to release its first title in November. First Comics, Inc. will unveil *Warp* as the cornerstone of its line, based on the three-part science-fantasy play first produced by the Organic Theater Company of chicago. Frank Brunner returns to comics to plot and draw the trilogy, which will then continue with new adventures after the adaptation has been completed.

The second title (the details of which have not been finalized at press time) is a co-creation of Joe Staton, who will draw and co-plot the title. FC president and editor Mike Gold calls the title "the one property that's perfectly suited to Joe's talents, and it's also the one property best suited to the fact that we're not operating under the Comics Code."

The third title, to appear by February, is a Mike Grell creation titled *Jon Mooses Sable, Freelance* and is described as "sort of an urban mercenary type of book." It will be both scripted and drawn by Grell.

Gold says First Comics, based in Chicago, has five books in the works right now, and are looking at three other proposals "very, very closely." The titles will all be published monthly; the 32-page, four-color format will include 28-editorial pages, including features pages and back-up features. The *Warp* adaptation will run 15-to-20 pages each issue, with back-up features to develop individual characters and expand the "Warp universe."

Gold says they won't introduce more than one book in any given month, and will build at a slow, steady rate. Ideally, he says, they would like to have nine to 12 regular monthly titles in three years. Though he says they aren't interested in doing a limited series, they would like to get involved in "something experimental" like *Epic* or *Heavy Metal* if they can find new ways of doing that.

The "they" includes, in addition to Gold, publisher Rick Obadiah and business manager Rick Felber. Gold is known to comic fans and pros as a founder of the Chicago Comicon in 1975, served as DC comics public relations director for two years, and has been in communications since 1969.

After a successful career in marketing and advertising (he named Ralston Purina's Meow Mix and created "The only food your cat asks for by name"), Obadiah produced both *Bleacher Bums* and *Warp*. While serving as managing director of the Organic Theater Company, he presented *Warp* at the 1980 Chicago Comicon, and Gold and Obadiah began discussing various ways of doing *Warp* as a comic book. After mulling over offers from Marvel, DC, and other groups, they decided it could be done better if they could do it on their own, and First Comics was formed in May of 1981.

"We brought in Rick Felber as our business manager, andhe promptly expanded the whole thing into a line of comics, figuring why should you do something half-way?" says Gold.

The above-named Joe Staton ("We had him pegged as our art director from the start," says Gold) was brought in to serve in that capacity last November, and associate editor Rick Oliver was added to round out most of the full-time staff.

They have indicated an eagerness to search out new talent, and feel their Chicago base will be an advantage to them in several ways.

"The artists and creators in the field don't live solely in New York anymore, they're all over the place," says Obadiah. "Our talent is all over the country. We're sitting here in the easiest place to get to in the world."

He says they're helping to set new standards for creators' rights, as well as royalty payments effective with the very first issue sold and extending to reprints.

"What we offer here is a working relationship with a group of people, an attitude, opportunities that I don't think exist in other companies," he says, citing film and television contacts that could push creators' work into different fields.

"Everything is spelled out in clear English" when contracts are drawn up, says Gold. "It's not something that's on the back of a check or a pre-printed tabloid."

Both men say they want to see their creators do as much work as possible, and not just for First Comics. They say exposure is a key to success, noting that how DC's *Warlord* could be motivated to try *Sable*, and vice versa. FC has also entered into merchandising contracts involving Grell's *Starslayer*, even though its six-issue run was published by Pacific Comics, and FC is handling all the rights not disposed of at Pacific. Grell won't continue *Starslayer* past six issues for Pacific, Gold notes with a secretive smile, and Obadiah says he's talked with two movie companies on Grell's behalf.

The three projects are: *Conan* by Roy Thomas and Barry Windsor-Smith (stories unselected); *Dr. Strange* by Steve Englehart and Frank Brunner (the Silver Dagger from his appearances in *Strange Tales* through the *Avengers* and *Marvel Two-in-One Annuals*. Also included in that projected six volume series will be the *Marvel Team-Up* story that helped wrap up the plot threads with art by John Byrne.

Shooter went on to say that Marvel is a full publishing company and the market place has proven that such projects as the Epic line are now commercially viable. "We've been doing creator-owned comics for a long time, since *Conan*," he said. He was referring to Marvel's licensed comics such as *Micronauts*, *Team America* and *G.I. Joe*, but added that now they can deal with individual creators

Shooter dismissed the assumption that the move was to counter the comic lines started by Pacific Comics and Eclipse.

He also announced that they were in the talking stages for several novels, "You know, with real words in them."

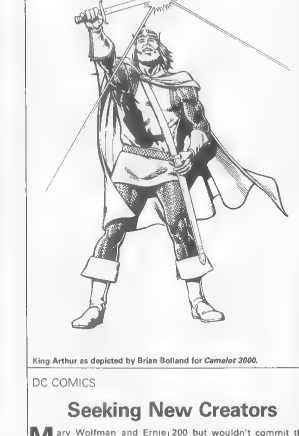
DC COMICS

# Plans for 1983 Firming

In late May, DC announced several plans for the remainder of 1982 extending through 1983. Included were more annuals, mini-series and the exclusive services of Gil Kane.

Bolstered by a Warner Publisher Services report claiming DC's sales were up 14 percent during the last six months of 1981 compared to 1980, the company is aggressively seeking to increase their market share which was up 3 percent.

The DC plans include a better package for their first non-re-



King Arthur as depicted by Brian Bolland for *Camelot 3000*.

turnable only series, *Camelot 3000*. Written by Mike W. Barr and illustrated by Britain's Brian Bolland and Bruce Patterson, the title will be a 12 monthly issue series printed on high quality baxter paper similar to Marvel's *Star-Lord* and COMICS SCENE. The 32-page title will carry advertising and retail for $1 and boasts the use of process coloring as opposed to traditional hand separation.

There are plans afoot for more non-returnable titles including the delayed *Amethyst, Princess of the Gem World*. Also, three additional mini-series are being planned for 1983, one of which will be by Gil Kane. Although rumored to be *The Atom*, DC says no official decision has been reached.

Kane signed an exclusive contract on May 12 to do work for DC as a writer and artist. Although his assignments aren't final, he will most likely write and draw the quarterly Superman book being done for the German market. Superman sells so well in Germany that DC has been doing this extra book for a few months now. Kane may also write and draw the *Superman Annual* planned for next year (this year's annual was changed into *DC Comics Presents Annual #1*).

Special issues throughout 1983 include *World's Finest #300*, *The Brave and the Bold #200*, *Legion of Super-Heroes #300*, and *Adventure Comics #500*. With the exception of *Adventure* the special issues will be 72 pages for $1.50. This year's slate of eight annuals will return with the addition of *Superman* and *Firestorm* annuals.

Several personnel and editorial changes were also announced. Marv Wolfman, who at one time was scheduled to write the revival, will now edit the *Blackhawk* title, premiering this summer. Ernie Colon inherits *Arion Lord of Atlantis* from Julius Schwartz and although Scott Shaw! will now write *and* draw *Captain Carrot*, Roy Thomas will remain the editor. Connie Hatch, formerly DC's proofreader, is now Assistant Editor for Special Projects and will edit the *World's Greatest Super-Heroes* newspaper strip. Replacing her will be Bob Fleming.

DC COMICS

# Seeking New Creators

Marv Wolfman and Ernie Colon have been named editors of a new comic which will feature adventure stories and art from previously unpublished people. The title will premiere in 1983 and is being carefully watched over by Managing Editor Dick Giordano who has been working with newcomers for about a year.

DC wouldn't say at press time whether or not the title will be a revamping of a current book or an addition to the schedule. Rumor had it that *Brave and Bold* would cease Batman team-ups in favor of the new format. DC's Mike Flynn said that *Brave and Bold* would continue team-ups through issue 200 but wouldn't commit the book beyond that. An interesting note is that the new book is set to premiere in early 1983 and *B&B* 200 isn't until April.

Wolfman would like to see submissions from writers in the following manner: a one page outline of an eight page story. If approved, a detailed plot would follow and then finally the full script. Wolfman wants to see characterization and unique plots. Colon says he wants to see art submissions that show ability at storytelling (continuity of action). No DC characters can be used and all contributors would be treated as full professionals with standard DC contracts, benefits and royalties.

INDEPENDENT PRESS

# *Cerebus* #1 Counterfeit

By now most people may have heard that hundreds of copies of *Cerberus the Aardvark* #have been surfacing around the country and all concerned believe them to be counterfeits.

At least five to seven men, believed to be operating out of Detroit, sold copies of the comic to comic shops, wholesalers and dealers throughout the United States. In almost all cases, the deals were made on a cash and carry basis with buyers paying an average of $20 a copy since the title, published in 1977, commands $100 in the marketplace.

Fantacc's Tom Skulan was the one to discover that multiple copies were being sold simultaneously. When Dave and Deni Simw ere contacted regarding the copies, Deni was led to believe that the copies were counterfeit

*Cerebus* #1 had only 2000 copies printed and Deni Sim told COMICS SCENE she believed all 2000 had sold out. She was skeptical about the hundreds of copies turning up.

Being printed in Canada, there is no copyright infringement taking place and when contacted the FBI said they couldn't act on the case. In fact, they sounded as if they didn't want to bother with "funny" books. The Sims are also not interested in getting personally involved.

It appears that the people involved in the selling of counterfeit copies may not have realized they were counterfeit and have attempted to make restitution while they and the unsuspecting buyers still try to locate the mastermind behind the matter

There are some 12 differences between the original copies and the suspected forgeries including different paper stock, staples, dust and lint on the inside front cover, the wrong red ink used on the cover, missing errors and a noticeable ink or chemical smell as if they were just printed.

COMICS SCENE will report on the matter in detail next issue.

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Aliens Love Book
Aliens Pepsi Game
Aliens Pin Up Book
Bettie and Me
Bizarre Adventures
Everything's Archie
Jesse & The Pussycats
Jonny Quest
Legionaire Lance
Laugh
Mighty Archie
Madhouse
Pep
Reggie and Me
Reggie's Wise Guy Jokes
Sabrina
That Wilkie Boy

SECTION IV
HARVEY COMICS

Harvey Fold issues
Casper the Friendly Ghos
Harvey Hits
Hot Stuff
Little Dot
Riff and Caribou
Riff and Casper

Riff and Geste, the Dog
Riff and Little Dot
Riff and Pig Gumbrella
Riff and Jackie Jokers
Riff and Sad Sack
Riff Bang Babies
Riff Bellamy
Riff Cash
Riff Collectors Comics
Riff Dollar Bills
Riff Fathers and Sons
Riff Funsters
Riff Ghosts
Riff Guitarist Fuzz
Riff Hangmans
Riff Hollywood
Riff Midgets
Riff Money World
Riff Rascals
Riff Rotten
Riff Scary Stories
Riff Ships of Mystery
Riff Zoomed
Sad Sack
Sad Sack & The Sarge

SECTION V
CHARLTON COMICS
DIRECT SALES PUBL SHERS

Captain Victory Finally
Mr. Master (Marvel)
Mr. Monster (Eclipse)
Mr. Monster's Movie Monsters
Zombies! (Marvel)
Zombies! Dark Escape
Nexus (Eclipse)
Nexus Graphic
Scorpion Rising Eclipse
Ms. Tree#1 & The Pirates
Ms. Tree#2 & The Prisoner
Thunder Agents
Thunder Agents
Fuzzbomb
X Men Companion
(Pantagraphics)
(add $2.00 per section for these specialty publishers as well)

SECTION VI
CHARLTON COMICS

All Charlton Fold issues
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Battlefield Action
Billy the Kid
Charlton Bullseye
Fashion Fun
Fashion Parade
Fashion Models
Hit Parade
Hot Rods and Racing Cars
Hunted...Born Wenwuld

Space Cowboy Romances
War

SECTION VII DIGESTS

Archie Where R U Digest
Angel Digest
Best of DC Digest
Best of Warren Digest
Archie
Archie Double Digest
Betty and Veronica Double Digest
Bugs Bunny Digest
Casper Digest Special
Casper Digest Magazine
Dennis the Menace Digest
Archie
Jughead Comics Digest
Jughead Jones Digest
Jughead Archie Digest
Laugh Comics Digest
Little Dot Digest
Madhouse Comics Digest
Richie Rich Best of Years
Richie Rich Digest
Riff Digest Winners
Riff Holiday Digest
Riff Mister Dollar Digest
Riff Wonder Digest

SECTION VIII MAGAZINES AND SPECIALTY ITEMS
(Magazines or strictly comics items are marked by Mag or Comic)

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Alter Medias
Amazing Heroes (Mag)
Analog
Bizarre Adventures
Blade
Cartoons the Magazine
Cinemafantastique**
Comic Art
Comic Buyers Guide (Mag)
Comic Collector
Comic Reader
Comics Interview
Comics Journal
Comics Scene (Mag)
Comics Scene Special
Comics Scene Spring Checklist
Cracked
Creepy Appendix
Crazy Monthly
Creepy Warren
Dragon Magazine
Epic Illustrated
Fangoria (Mag)
Fantastic Films (Mag)
Fantastic Monsters**
New Media

Space Movies
Starlog (Mag)
Starlog Photo Fantasy
Starlog Yearbook
Stephen King's Creepshow
Stephen King's Cycle of the Werewolf
Swamp Thing
Tarzan
Twilight Zone
Twilight Zone Magazine
Vampirella
Vampirella Monthly (Starlog)
Video Magazine (Mag)
Warren Comics
Weird
Weird Heroes
Weird Tales of the Future
Weird Tales of Terror
Wizard (Mag)

SECTION IX
MAGAZINES

Analog
Asimov's Science Fiction
Astronomy
Bizarre Adventures
Cinefex
Cinemafantastique
Creepy
Dragon Magazine
Epic Illustrated
Fangoria
Fantastic Films
Fantastic Monsters
Heavy Metal
Heavy Metal Specials
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Weird Tales of the Future
Weird Tales of Terror
Wizard
Wizard Lampoon
Wizard Lampoon Special
1984 Magazine* (Warren)
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Savage Sword of Conan**
Atlantis
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Books
Sketch Books
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TREASURY and PAPERBACK BOOKS

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All Marvel Paperbacks

•For information on WHITMAN comics and BIRTHDAY cards (silhouettes) please write us!!

INDEPENT PRESS

# More From John C. Publications, Noble, and Eclipse

**ECLIPSE**

Dean Mullaney, publisher of Eclipse, has reported a format change for the previously announced Ms. Tree magazine. Titled *Ms. Tree's Thrilling Detective Adventures*, the magazine will still be bi-monthly but only contain 32 pages with a $1.50 cover price. Details on the second strip have not been finalized.

Billy Graham, who has worked for *Eclipse* in the past, has been named as the new artist, on *Sabre*, beginning with issue number three, due this fall. Graham picks up the storyline after the first two issues, which reprinted the original graphic novel by Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy. Gulacy will continue to do the covers. Graham and McGregor worked previously on stories for *Eclipse* and the celebrated Black Panther stories in *Jungle Adventures*.

By the time you read this, the Buster Keaton magazine we mentioned in CS#2 should be out.

**JOHN C. PUBLICATIONS**

John Carbonaro has released *Basically Strange #1*, a mystery magzine, edited by Chris Adames. Much of the material has already seen print in *Red Circle Sorcery*. Artists represented in the issue include Frank Thorne, Wally Wood, Howard Chaykin, and Gray Morrow. The title will be on a bi-monthly schedule.

Another reprint title will showcase the best of the Wally Wood/Reed Crandall T.H.U.N.-D.E.R Agent stories. This title may appear in full color.

Den Adkins and Rich Buckler are now doing work for the other Carbonaro titles. Adkins will become a contributor to the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents* magazine and Buckler is penciling the team-up of the Mighty Crusaders and the T.H.U.N.-D.E.R Agents. Soon after, the Crusaders will receive their own title.

Carbonaro reports he has many other projects under consideration and will continue to make full use of the many superheroes he has licensed from other publishers. One thing he willnot be doing is the *Space Giants* title. When he served relations with Pat Gabriele, Gabriele took the title, which he had the rights to, and will try and publish it on his own, through Elder Comics

**ROBILE WEEP**

*Justice Machine #5* will introduce Ms. Liberty, a superescape artist who will become a regular player in the magazine. A Paul Gulacy cover will herald her introduction in late August.

Mike Gustovich will write and ink the *JM Annual*, due in September, where the Machiners meet the T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents. Continuity buffs please take note. DC newcomer Pans Collins and Bill Reinhold will be doing the pencils and Bill Sienkiewicz has done the backcover.

**ALTERNATE PUBLICATIONS**

The publishers have announced their intentions to go full color on the interior of their *Alternate Existence* (sic) magazine.

**After the first story ends in *Captain Victory #6*, Jack Kirby will return with another adventure. Some of the supporting cast will appear in one shots over the summer and into the fall.**

CHARACTERS

# The Cinematic Sub-Mariner

A motion picture version of Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner, the Atlantean anti-hero created by the late Bill Everett in 1939, is now in development at Turman-Foster Productions.

Essentially, the live-action project is a co-venture between Marvel Entertainment (which owns the rights to Prince Namor) and producers Lawrence Turman and David Foster, whose credits include *Caveman*, John Carpenter's current hit *The Thing*, and the forthcoming *Second Thoughts*.

"I'm amazed that anyone knows about this," David Foster told COMICS SCENE in mid-May. "Nothing is really definite since we've been busy with *The Thing*, but we *are* developing *The Sub-Mariner* as a theatrical feature—not a television series—with writer/director Kenneth Johnson.

"At present, we don't have a deal with any studio to finance the film. We'll probably start talking to them in June and see if we can interest one in the idea, set up a deal, and start Ken working on the script."

Johnson is a fantasy TV series veteran. He worked on *The Six Million Dollar Man*, created *The Bionic Woman* and *Cliffhangers*, and adapted Marvel's *The Incredible Hulk*.

Despite Universal's previous associations with Namor, Ken Johnson and Turman-Foster Productions (whose offices are located on the studio lot), Universal doesn't have any "inside track" on picking up this new project, according to Foster. *Incredible Hulk* for television, he says, and directed the highly-rated *Hulk* pilot and several subsequent two-part episodes ("Married" a.k.a. "The Bride of the Incredible Hulk," "Prometheus") and served as the series' executive producer.

"In any case, special effects experts or other creative personnel have been selected "We have to get a script first," Foster explains. "Of course, we don't have a budget for the film yet either, but it'll probably be about $12 million. And *if* everything works out right, we *could* begin filming as early as summer 1983."

Stan Lee, an old hand at scripting Namor's comic book adventures, will be on board as creative consultant. "We'd certainly be foolish not to have Stan intimately involved in *The Sub-Mariner*," Foster says, "especially after he worked so long, so well, and so successfully with Ken Johnson on *The Incredible Hulk*."

ANIMATION

# 300 Layed Off At Filmation

When the networks announced their Saturday morning schedules for the 1982-83 season, Hanna-Barbera was the undisputed winner in terms of productin commitments. Marvel Productions followed with four series, three of which are new. On the other hand, Filmation, who had a meteoric rise in the late 1960s, lost all their current shows and ended up selling one series.

Some 300 people were layed off as a result, sending shockwaves throughout the industry. Bud Hester, business representative for the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists union, adds that many of the full-length feature films are winding down at the sametime more layoffs coming from Aurora Production and Ralph Bakshi.

"Generally we usually hit full employment," Hester said in late May. "But now that Filmation has only 13 half-hour shows to produce (*Gilligan's World*), we have people scrounging for work." Hester also pointed out that the amount lost by Filmation. However, Marvel's contract with the union only forces Marvel to keep their staff up to capacity, allowing them to send the rest of the work to animators overseas. This practice severely frustrates the union.

"We've gotten an agreement from Hanna-Barbera for 24 weeks' worth of work but that's only about $12,000" Hester explained. "We're going to be losing some of our top people and at this point, that's going to leave us with second rate production.

Hester said the hope of animators rests with cable television. Since animation costs far less than live-action production, it will be easier for cable channels to commission new animated fare. "We don't have to pay residuals or big name stars and live action has a lot of top heavy costs," Hester said.

The climate in California is tense present as those employed begin work on the next season, scheduled to premiere in mid-September.

The new schedules show the loss of action/adventure shows (Filmation's only type of production) with the meteoric rise of *The Smurfs*. NBC re-signed with Belgium's SEPP for $7.5 million to produce about a dozen 90-minute Saturday morning episodes of the series as well as prime time specials. Hanna Barbera will continue to produce the shows

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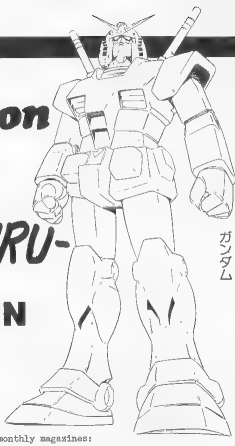


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# Mickey's Christmas Carol

It's a comeback for Mickey Mouse. This Christmas the Walt Disney Studios will release to theaters a 24-minute short entitled *Mickey's Christmas Carol*. Incredibly, it has been nearly 30 years since Mickey's last theatrical short, *The Simple Things*, in 1953. Supporting Mickey Mouse will be all of the classic Disney "players" including Donald Duck, Jiminy Cricket, Black Pete, Goofy, Uncle Scrooge, Morty and Ferdy Mouse, Grandma Duck, Clarabelle Horace Horsecollar and even the lovable giant Willie from *Mickey and the Beanstalk*.

Producer and director Burny Mattinson explains the studio's approach to the project. "We are not really trying to do a definitive version of the Dickens' classic. Everybody already knows and loves the story, so we are presenting it as if the Disney stock players were putting on a show. We are doing it the way Mickey and his gang would do it. At one time we even thought of calling it *The Disney Players Present: A Christmas Carol*."

For the young new animators that have come to the Disney studios in recent years it is a chance of a lifetime to draw and recreate the characters that they've known so well all of their lives. In a sense these new animators are Disney's true children. Having grown up with the rich Disney legacy of Disneyland and the continued release of the Disney classics, it's as if the Disney characters have been their playmates all their lives. For 23-year-old Mark Henn it is almost unbelievable that 1½ years after graduation from the California Institute of the Arts, he is employed at the Disney Studios as the key animator on Mickey Mouse's big comeback featurette.

"Although it looks simple," explains Henn, "drawing Mickey is actually very difficult. He has a certain look that everybody knows and if he isn't drawn quite right—if his nose is too big or his ears are in the wrong position—it will be very obvious."

"It's true," says Mattinson. "Every animator has an idea of what the characters should look like and how they should perform. The animators will look at each other's tests and criticize them—saying that a character just doesn't do that sort of thing or whatever. They have a very good sense of knowing just what sort of action is exactly right. As far as the actual drawing goes we have the original character model sheets and, of course, we have all the old shorts to look at."

Mickey's physical appearance has undergone a steady evolution since his first screen appearance in *Steamboat Willie* (1928). In the 1980s Mickey reverts to his middle years look (pupil eyes and solid black ears) with *Mickey and the Beanstalk* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* serving as models. The work of veteran Disney animators, Frank Thomas and the Freddie Moore, has been Henn's inspiration in creating the newest incarnation of Mickey.

The biggest challenge facing Burny Mattinson, however, was the voices for the characters. Most of the famous voice actors who first created the distinctive voices have passed on. Gone is Pinto Colvig's lovable, gulping Goofy; and so is Cliff Edwards who voiced that little green cricket named Jiminy, and Billy Bletcher who breathed blustery villainy into Black Pete and even Bill Thompson who gave Uncle Scrooge his voice in his only screen appearance

"Of course we interviewed many voice actors and others to find the voices that could match the old familiar ones. Some people just called on the telephone and said, 'Uh, hi. Gwarsh. I'm Goofy,' and I'd laugh and invite them down for a try-out; sometimes they worked out and sometimes they didn't.

"For Mickey we have the talents of Wayne Allwine, a sound editor here at the studio. He was trained by Jim Macdonald, who was in turn trained by Walt himself. So it's been sort of handed down and he does a very good Mickey. Clarence "Ducky" Nash, of course, continues as the voice of Donald Duck. He's quite elderly now, yet he came in and did a beautiful young Donald Duck voice for us. Clarence is a real pro, his ad libs were so good, we ended up incorporating them into the script," laughs Mattinson.

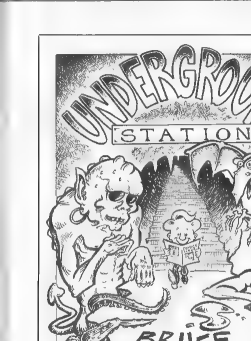
Other voices include Hal Smith as Goofy, Will Ryan as both Black Pete and Willie the giant, Eddie Carrol as Jiminy Cricket and Scottish-born actor Alan Young as the fesity Uncle Scrooge McDuck, who as you would expect, plays Ebenezer Scrooge in this Disney Players version of *A Christmas Carol*.

"Originally, Bill Thompson voiced Uncle Scrooge in his only screen appearance, but since Bill passed away we tried out several people. But I kept coming back in my mind to actor Alan Young who did the voice of Scrooge on a Disneyland Record some seven or eight years ago, so I called to ask if he would do the role of Uncle Scrooge for us and, of course, he's perfect for the role."

In many ways this special project is a Christmas gift to the people who have known and loved the Disney characters all their lives. But it is not the only Disney animation project in the works. A Goofy featurette is in the works as well as another Winnie the Pooh short. And, of course, there is the feature film *The Black Cauldron*, which has a couple more years of production ahead of it.

*Mickey's Christmas Carol*, produced and directed by Burny Mattinson for executive producer Ron Miller, is scheduled for a Christmas 1982 release.

**The current Disney animation crew: Burny Mattinson (seated), John Lasseter, Rick Hoppe, Ed Gombert, Dave Block, Barry Temple, Glen Keane, Randy Cartwright, Mark Henn and Tim O'Donnell Henn, inset, draws Mickey.**




This month's logo was submitted by *Comix World* contributor David Miller of Concord, Ca. Much obliged, Dave!

**KITCHEN SINK**

Denis Kitchen will be releasing the 8½" x 11" *Outer Space Spirit*, which will retail for $8.95 and features a series of Spirit stories done by Will Eisner & Wally Wood in 1952. These have already been reprinted in Kitchen Sink's *Spirit* #20-28. The cover will consist of a tastefully pieced together montage of art by Wally Wood and Pete Poplaski.

Due in July is Kitchen's *Bizarre Sex* #10 with a Bill Stout cover; 16 pages by Guy Colwell; a 5-page "Omaha" sequel; and additional contributions by Geary, Kenny, Lobes, Pound, Schwind and Stiles.

**LAST GASP** claims that they have *Commies from Mars* #4 out edited by Tim Boxell and featuring Larry Rippee and others. Also due by now is *Cherry Poptart* featuring Larry Welz, Jay Kinney and Larry Todd.

Additionally, they will be releasing *Junkwaffel* #5 which will include a lot of unpublished Vaughn Bode art. Its been almost 10 years since *Junkwaffel* #4 and his widow allegedly has access to much unpublished Bode art. His brother Vincent, also an artist, will be helping on the project.

Mark Bode says that he has finished off an incomplete *Cheech Wizard* strip started by his late father. It will be colored and inked and will appear in *Epic*, probably in the fall.

Bill Griffith of "Zippy" fame is apparently suing the movie producers of *Young Lust* for a little rip-off and may be squiring about fan support in the near future. He has it from me; I own copies of *Young Lust* #1-4 which were done in the '70s. The better news is that there may be some bidding wars coming for the rights to a Zippy movie

From **RIP-OFF PRESS** came the terrible news that underground cartoonist Dave Sheridan died of cancer late in March at the age of 38. His widow, Diva, gave birth to their daughter Dorothy Rae undergrounds left me with a genuine sense of loss. He had done *The Leather Nun* (pictured here) as well as *Mother's Day's; Meef;* the *Balloon Vender* and substantial collaborations with Gilbert Shelton and Paul Mavrides on the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers and other Rip-Off projects. Issue #7 of *The Freak Brothers* is out now.

Dave Sheridan collaborated on many of the earlier titles mentioned above with Fred Schrier who has done a color cover for the March issue of *Handling and Shipping Management*. Fred is still an active illustrator in Ohio

*Gates of Eden* #2 should be out by now with a Jeff Jones cover and 48 pages, including contributions by Trina, Steve Lelaloha, Leonard Rifas; Spain; Kim Deitch; and Michael Gilbert.

Look Mom comics (799 B'way, Suite 325, New York, NY 10003) has released *Psycho #2*. An excerpt is featured elsewhere on the page . . . *The Media Sight* fanzine features scover by underground artist Brad Foster. . . .

Jane Oliver writes and claims that *Jerry the Vampire #2* should be out this summer, which will feature a color cover with 32 interior pages with Larry Todd, Larry Welz and Brad Foster. Up to now, Jane has been doing a series of mini-comix, *Dance of Death*, for *Comix World*. *CW #2* and 3 feature contributions by Larry Todd.

Raw Books (27 Greene St., New York, N.Y. 10013) has released *Jimbo*, an anthology of Gary Panter's material from the L.A. punkzine *Slash*.

An intensely lush oddity for completionists who collect undergrounds is the *Gospel of John* published in 1980 by Marantha Music (P.O. Box 1396; Costa Mesa, CA. 92626), which is a 24-page 8½" x 11" religious promotional magazine. This would not qualify for this column except that Griffin had such a pronounced influence on the West Coast psychedelic posters of the '60s and subsequently was briefly active in the early underground comics scene. The quality of paper and lavish rich color interior by Griffin makes the $2 comic a musthave for his old fans.

Simultaneously with the release of *Queen of Hairy Flies* Michael Roden will be releasing *Alien Carnival Comix*; which will be 8½" x 8½" with 16 pages andyellow col.or stock with blue thermograph-raised ink. It will feature Alder, Marsh, Ryan, Roden, Roldo & Starr as well as John Thompson.

This will be the first appearance of John Thompson art in almost 10 years. His highly stylized mystical graphics first manifested themselves in *Tales of the Sphinx* in 1972 and 1973. #2 and #3 were published by Kitchen Sink and Print Mint, respectively. Now it appears that there is a fair chance that there will publish *Sphinx* #1 for the first time.

I recently heard from J. Michael Leonard that he's leased his *Star Weevil* strip to Evennow Productions in Australia for a proposed full-length animated movie. He recently did "Death Takes a Shit" for Denis Kitchen's *Death* line which is resurfacing. Michael teaches a cartoon class at the local junior college as well as continuing to contribute cartoons to *Playboy* and possibly the *Lampoon*. He's also done a billboard for a local restaurant that sounds attractive; so Michael is still an active artist.

Larry Rippee writes that he has done a one pager entitled "Small Monster Making a Phone Call" which should show up in *Eclipse #6* or 7. His material was also in a New York Comic Art Exhibit along with Howard Cruse, Leonard Rifas, Lee Mars and Tuli Kupferberg.

"DO YOU EVER CONSIDER ALL THOSE ANGELS IN THE SKY? AND YOU FIND THAT THE WORLD IN RETURN IS ALL INSIDE TOOTS, MAN?"
"OUR EYES ARE OPEN. OUR EYES ARE OPEN."

**A brief glimpse of the art of the late Dave Sheridan.**

# Focus

## Alan Brennert Coming Full Circle

Alan Brennert made a big splash in comics circles with his first published script, "To Kill a Legend," the lead Batman tale in *Detective Comics* #500. Brennert already had a successful career in television writing. What turned him to writing comics?

"It's a little bit deceiving to say I started out writing for television. I was a comic-book fan as a teenager . . . one of those dark secrets from everybody's past. I copublished a fanzine back around 1970. I fell away from it when I went to college and began writing science fiction and then television. But I always had a soft spot for comic books."

Brennert's chance to write a comics script was a happy accident. He told an old comics-fan friend, Paul Levitz, then editor of the *Batman* books, about a story for the Caped Crusader that Brennert had always wanted to do. He thought Levitz might be able to use the idea sometime. Brennert picks up the story: "And Paul said, 'You're a writer, why don't you do it for me?' Neither of us thought about it for a year or so, and then I actually sat down and started working on it. That story became 'To Kill a Legend' in *Detective* #500. I had no idea it was going to wind up there. No one could have been more surprised than me that it was the lead story in that important issue."

Dick Giordano was the artist assigned to that first script, and six months later he replaced Levitz as the *Batman* editor. Giordano asked Brennert to turn out some scripts for *The Brave and the Bold*. Brennert praises both editors. "It was just serendipity all the way down the line, and I've been very lucky to work with people like Paul and Dick."

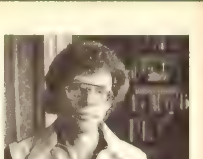
Brennert finds film and comics writing quite different, although he says reading comics was good ground work for his scripts on the *Wonder Woman* and *Buck Rogers* TV series. He also says a comic-book writer has much more control over the finished product than a TV writer. He explained, "There are fewer people to deal with. When I write a comic book, I know it's me and the editor—together with the artist. Most of my problems in comics have been pretty minor stuff with the artist—a panel here and there."

But in film and television, says Brennert, "You have directors, you have producers, you have studio executives. There are so many people involved. And, naturally, the more people involved, the less reflective of the writer's work is the finished product."

Though writing for each medium is different, Brennert feels comics and film have some common ground. "Both are dramatic media. People often refer to comic books as a literary medium, but I don't think of it that way. In all of my stories I try to avoid captions. I don't think anybody reads them—I know I don't. If I'm reading a comic-book story and I see a page that's full of captions, I will probably skim them to see if there's anything of vital plot importance. I think a good comic-book story progresses by the visual action and by the dialogue . . . in the same way that a film does."

Brennert has a unique perspective on film adaptations of comic-book characters, since he is a comics fan, a professional comics writer, and a professional screen writer. He says that, although comics fans often resent them, the changes made in a character and his world are usually made for valid, dramatic reasons. "I think *The Incredible Hulk* TV show worked on a dramatic level in a way it never could if you'd just translated the comic to the screen. It would have been just ludicrous to have this big green guy going around talking about himself in the third person all the time. The *Hulk* show also improved on the origin by giving Banner more of an emotional connection—in terms of his wife dying in an accident—to the events of his own gamma-ray accident."

On the other hand, Brennert would have liked to be more "comic-booky" in his scripts for the *Wonder Woman* series. "I would have liked to be able to use supervillains. I think when you're doing a show with a comic-book theme like *Wonder Woman*, you can get away with things like super-villains and larger-than-life dialogue that wouldn't have worked on *Hulk* or some other show with a serious theme."



**Alan Brennert and his comics debut.**

Brennert feels the rift between the comics world and Hollywood is closing up, as more and more younger writers move into the film industry, writers who have grown up reading comics. In addition, the producers are becoming interested in properties like comics, that can be exciting without graphic violence. And in comics? "There are artists and writers who are trying to bring a cinematic style to the medium. It began with Jim Steranko's *SHIELD* and continues now with writer-artists like Frank Miller on *Daredevil*. Miller treats each panel in a comic like a frame in a movie. Unfortunately, most comic artists today are only re-doing what other comic artists have already done. There are young artists who are trying to imitate Bill Sinkiewicz—who don't realize that Sinkiewicz is only doing Neal Adams! Even a very good artist like John Byrne is only a synthesis of Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Gil Kane and a few others. So I think it's good that maybe some of the newer people are again discovering film as a source of inspiration."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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COMICS scene

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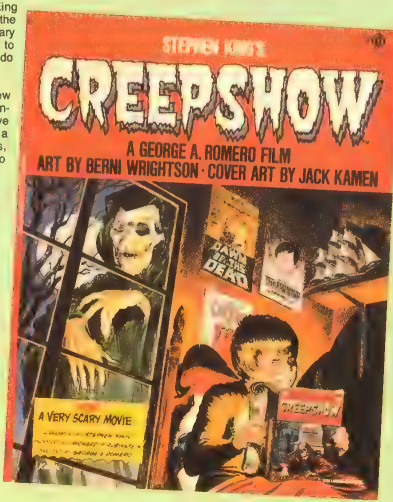


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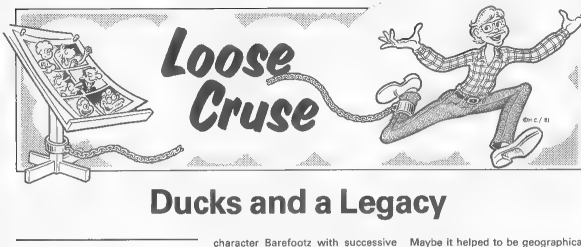


# Ducks and a Legacy

**By HOWARD CRUSE**

Ducks! I've got ducks on the brain this week!

Tuesday I brought home *Uncle Scrooge McDuck: His Life and Times,* the lavish 376-page compilation of Carl Barks's Uncle Scrooge tales which you read about in COMICS SCENE #2.

Watching Scrooge, Donald Duck and the Junior Woodchuck nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie trot about the globe on their exotic quests, I reverberate with old Alabama memories. Part of me becomes again the 11-year-old kid who devoured "The Lemming With The Locket" when it first hit print in 1955. There I am sipping my Dr Pepper after school as I read, my hand puppets and Froggy the Gremlin rubber effigy near at hand along with the drawing tools with which I will compose comic book stories as my own inspiration strikes.

They were trying to get away for a vacation, reports Barks's wife Garé of the days when "Lemming With The Locket" was being drawn. And there were *all of those lemmings* to be inked! Suddenly a human dimension comes into focus.

Comics, it seemed to me as a kid, somehow sprang into being as finished products. I had to sweat to create even an awkward drawing, but I was a *beginner;* surely it must get easier! I never considered the labor involved in putting the ink lines on the paper, never thought the process could still be rough once you got *good!*

But those were a lot of lemmings. Having spent quite a few hours in the intervening years swamping my own character Barefootz with successive waves of gronking frogs, I can identify with what a major lemming migration must have meant to the finger bones of the Barks household.

You couldn't just carve a lemming onto a rubber stamp and bang the beasts out the way a librarian bangs out books at the checkout desk. Each lemming had to bound and scamper in its own way, around its own momentary obstacle. Who was Barks drawing those lemmings for? Did he picture me in Springville, Alabama, as I pored over the pages and took it for granted that I and the comics I loved merited such meticulous attention? How did he avoid thinking as so many comic artists seem to have thought: "What the hell do those 11-year-olds know or care? I'll just knock out some crap and it'll look great when it's colored!"

Some special character fiber may have played a role, some old-fashioned notion of doing a job well. Maybe it helped to be geographically isolated from an industry where cynicism can breed within the air-conditioning ducts like Legionnaire's Disease.

But a big factor had to be that within Carl Barks himself was a kid who read those Uncle Scrooge comics and who wasn't going to stand for some jerk foisting sloppy lemmings off on him.

The artistic grit in the work of Barks and scattered others lingered in my blood. Later on I came upon *Light,* an underground comic book drawn by Greg Irons, and I recognized the old thrill.

I'd seen UGs before that, but I hadn't happened upon the worthy ones, and I had a false impression that undergrounds as a genre were produced sloppily, amateurishly and self-indulgently. *Light* was a revelation. It was the work of an artist who respected his readers and gave them his best. Comix by Sheridan, Schrier, Crumb

Mr. Cruse has been given a free hand to express his thoughts and ideas in any manner he wishes within the scope of this publication. This column does not necessarily represent the editorial views of COMICS SCENE nor our philosophy. The contents is © 1982 by Howard Cruse.

and others solidified my admiration for the UG movement. A fresh generation of artists was rebelling against the low expectations reflected in many mainstream comic books. Their sensibility may have sprung more from Haight-Ashbury than Duckburg, but there was a Barks-like idealism in their commitment to doing the work *right*. Probably neither they nor Barks would have felt comfortable chattering about "ideals," but, to readers like me, their uncompromising commitment was evident and exciting. I saw in the best UGs what I had perceived at a gut level when I was 11. I could never imagine how drawing comics could be approached otherwise and still be fun.

Surely Barks sweated, and surely he had fun. In Alabama I merely admired the simple rightness of the result. Barks made it all look easy. *Anybody* could think up an Uncle Scrooge story, it seemed. You just had to start him worrying about keeping his money bin safe. The Springville kid with his piggy bank could relate to that. The feelings aren't exactly alien to a grown-up trying to keep his Dreyfus Fund afloat.

Barks's stories were absorbing because we readers could recognize emotions like our own expressed in the actions and obsessions of the wily old duck. In "Back to the Klondike" Scrooge's failing memory made him fret. I could dig it; I've been absent-minded since grade school, to my frequent grief. And alertness is no minor matter. Scrooge had 250 umptillion fabutillion dollars to protect. I had messy stacks of comic books, which in my weary mother occasionally contemplated with the confiscatory gaze of a Beagle Boy.

Frazzled by the abrasions of urban pollution and his own burdensome wealth, Scrooge flees to the "Land of the Pigmy Indians" or the Himalayan refuge of Tralla La. Needing reassurance that his riches are second to none, Scrooge pits his ball of collected string against the similar ball hoarded by Flintheart Glomgold, their other forms of wealth being equal. Nature's fury, in the form of everything from ants to zebras, is pitted against the determination of the two misers to win in the status game.

There's reality in the craziness. Sometimes each of us longs to escape; sometimes we're ready to engage enthusiastically in life's battles. Barks takes the appetites and insecurities of existence into heady realms of cartoon fantasy, but the adventures are rooted solidly in the textures of everyday emotion.

By comparison, Batman's oath to avenge the murder of his parents is an abstract proposition, a traumatic childhood loss precipitating not just a crimefighting career, but one with bizarre costumes, accoutrements, and science-fiction overtones. I dug *Batman* comics, but they were of a different, more imaginary magnitude than the talking ducks of Carl Barks. Scrooge didn't guard his money bin because of an ancient oath; he wanted to swim in those coins right now. Being rich was as immediate a need to him as eating. Each coin of his zillions seemed to stand as the last shaky bulwark between him and cosmic starvation. Excessive, but human. Sex and football have been known to play a similar central role in the universes of non-web-footed Earthlings.

Wednesday I took a break from Barks and pulled out an old R. Crumb story called *Fritz the Cat: Special Agent for the CIA*. What I had in mind was observing how a different but comparably gifted artist made his extended funny-animal story come alive instead of flailing lifelessly on the page as many comics populated by costumed humans do.

In Crumb's international espionage spoof, Fritz is dispatched to China by the CIA to investigate reports of an "ultimate weapon." The obvious opening would have shown Fritz receiving his marching orders from the Chief. But Crumb chooses to spend a couple of well-paced pages letting us know what sort of cat Fritz is and placing him in a recognizable world. Speeding recklessly toward headquarters in his turbocar, Fritz is halted by a determined traffic cop. Too much the hotshot to bow to authority, the cat roars blithely away as the cop tenders his summons. At CIA headquarters, Fritz instructs a lackey, "I want this car completely dismantled and every part sterilized and polished. Then have it reassembled with absolute precision. Can you get it done before lunch?"

Before the spying plot is launched on page three, Fritz has been lasciviously mobbed by outer-office secretaries whom he dispatches with a cavalier backhand, proceeding to try and impress the Chief with his epicurean *savoir-faire*. All of this introduces Fritz's unique (and hardly laudable) personality and prepares us to believe in the cartooned reality of the story which follows.

We believe because we see ourselves. Obnoxious as Crumb's cat can be, we feel a connection. Fritz acts out anarchic impulses which most of us keep a lid on, and it's a perverse delight to watch a fictional character cast off restraints. It's his lack of restraint that makes Uncle Scrooge so appealing. If we were rich, most of us would require ourselves to behave with some moderation. We'd probably feel embarrassed to run coins through our fingers, much less dive through them like a porpoise. Not so Scrooge, and we have vicarious fun watching him indulge in forbidden pleasures. In doing so, we put ourselves right on the comic page with him.

If we lived our lives in a comic book world, what would our panels be shaped like? Compared to those of Barks, Crumb's *Fritz* panels are bulging with detail, wobbly around the edges. But Crumb's format resembled Barks's in that the action proceeded in modest, same-sized segments. This used to be common comic book practice, and it made for easy reading. Through book after book the ducks blazed rumble-tumble trails of adventure framed comfortably without the aid of explosive splash panels or careening action amplified by fragmented balloons that ricocheted off of the margins. I'd be the last to decry the loosening-up of comic page compositions since the "Marvel revolution"; I'm too much the admirer of Will Eisner's work, past and present, to want everything slotted into monotonous boxes. But looking at Carl Barks's stories certainly reminds me of the alternative virtues of understatement.

Understatement can give great impact to actions. Last month's apocalyptic struggle of the superheroes to save the cosmos may be less engrossing than watching Scrooge and Glomgold unrolling their balls of string across Africa. More of us know the feelings involved in saving string than in saving universes. Our spirits may be as infinite as outer space, but the scenery of our emotional lives is more commonly composed of stray string than stray star systems. Mostly we experience our adventures in modest segments. The kind of real-life events

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# COMING IN STARLOG #61

With the anniversary issue behind us, we're ready for a very busy, jam-packed summer. Issue #61 starts off with Part II of Ed Naha's exclusive report on the making of *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan.* We'll also have additional commentary by columnists Bjo Trimble and David Gerrold. To top it all off, we'll present a chat with Walter Koenig who has a rather meaty role in the film.

Just about everyone is talking about the Australian hit *Road Warrior* and STARLOG has interviews with producer Byron Kennedy and director George Miller. Also, Warner Brothers sent a selection of photos superior to what was sent to FANGORIA, so check out the full-color action!

The making of the adventure film *Megaforce* is documented with interviews and photos. And we have a double treat for readers as we present exclusive interviews with this summer's hottest femmes fatales: *Conan*'s Sandahl Bergman and *Blade Runner*'s Sean Young.

We have a *very* special feature on hand: a pictorial report on *Revenge of the Jedi*'s Arizona desert shoot. It's our first look at what's in store for the third part of the *Star Wars* epic.

Rounding out the coverage we have a progress report on Disney's EPCOT, an interview with Stuart Cohen, producer of *The Thing,* reports on the new TV season, summer science fiction reading, the movie *Atomic Cafe,* and plans for a new James Bond film starring Sean Connery.

that would justify major splash panels may leave us exhilarated or so shaken that we require psychotherapy, but much that we cherish, much that feeds stirring fantasies in our minds, would fit well into the simple panels that Carl Barks liked to draw.

Recently I had the unfortunate experience of reading one volume apiece from the *Archie* and *Richie Rich* chronicles.

Let me be fair: maybe these were off issues. Maybe they weren't representative. But these particular comic books made me angry. Through page after page, cardboard characters were herded through arbitrary paces in the service of empty jokes. Real human fears and fantasies never made a dent in the pointless proceedings.

It's no excuse to argue that *Richie Rich* is created for very young readers. So were the Dr. Seuss books I treasured even before I could read them myself. Dr. Seuss is tuned in to a child's authentic wavelength. The tenacity and pluck of Bartholomew Cubbins as he tries to steer the King from folly has surely stirred the hearts of a million kids who long to feel that they can be important in the world. You'd never know that kids have real, multileveled feelings by reading *Richie Rich.* And you'd never guess how complex are the conflicts of adolescence by watching *Archie* cavort.

Comics which are satisfied to crank out mechanical variations on artificial premises make me angry because of the message they transmit to the readers in a new generation. The message is that mediocrity is okay, that neither kids' feelings nor their intelligence need to be respected. That they don't deserve thoughtful comics prepared with imagination and craft. That comic art is nothing more than a trivial means for money to change hands.

Carl Barks's comics broadcast a very different message. And the comics of a noble minority of artists today do the same—though we're kidding ourselves if we don't admit that the numbers lie on the side of the drones.

To try and copy the Carl Barks methods of storytelling would be to miss the point, though there are few of us who could not learn a few worthwhile tricks in the process.

Times are different. New themes and styles will dominate. But I doubt that any artist can create comics of enduring value without incorporating the one overriding legacy of Carl Barks's thoughtful, unforgettable yarns: He cared.

About his comics. About his ducks. About his readers. And he sweated the sweat that was necessary to do justice to all of them.

However many damn lemmings it took! ■

# Around the World

# Time Masters
## The Moebius Epic

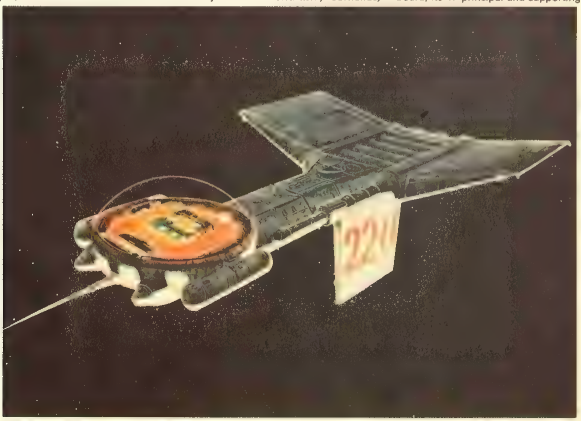
**By ANTHONY CLARKE**

Time is the strangest thing . . . and this spring in Paris it was the topic of three science fiction releases: the English production *Time Bandits,* the Japanese *Time Slip* and the long-awaited René Laloux animated feature film *Les Maîtres du Temps . . . Time Masters.*

The film marks producer Laloux's second major animated feature and promises to be the vanguard of a series of West European-made and produced animated science fiction features. His first, the Czech-French co-production based on Stefan Wul's *Le Planète Sauvage,* with designs by Topor, was honored in 1973 as the first animated film to win the Cannes Film Festival's coveted Prix Spécial du Jury. For his second feature (he has several award-winning shorts to his credit as well), the producer has again returned to his literary source of inspiration. This time he has chosen Stefan Wul's 1958 novel *L'Orphelin de Péride* (The Orphan of Peride), with storyboards adeptly handled by science fiction fantasy wizard "Moebius."

Famed as a hyper-realist reconteur for Jean-Michel Charlier's Western serial *Lt. Blueberry* (under the pseudonym "GIR") and a highly stylized creator of fantasy and futuristic adventure (as "Moebius") in his own series *The Adventure of John Wätercolor, Cauchemar Blanc, Arzach, Major Grubert* and *Jerry Cornelius,* Jean Giraud (his real name) has successfully synthesized both of his drawing styles for the film's imaginative presentation of the Stefan Wul novel. His film credits include his work on the aborted Jodorowsky production of *Dune,* his close collaboration with H.R. Giger on Ridley Scott's *Alien* and storyboards for Disney's *Tron,* which was done after his initial work on *Time Masters.*

Although uncredited for his work in the animated feature *The Heavy Metal Movie* (derived from the sci-fi magazine *Métal Hurlant,* which he helped found), Moebius was duly compensated for the oversight by being given carte blanche by Laloux in the creation of *Time Masters'* 10-volume storyboard, its 17 principal and supporting



**Jeffa's space vessel travels towards Earth.**

characters, costumes, space vessels, background decor and the colorful animalia that traipse throughout it. All of which he designed with the animator's work in mind; thus simplicity became an overriding factor. As producer Laloux exclaimed, "He's a kind of Gustav Doré of contemporary graphism, capable of indefinitely renewing his style without copying any of the hundreds of other characters that have already been created for the comic strips. He proposed to me 150 different examples before we decided on the appearance of the epic's protagonists." True as that may be, in the final outcome, the film's male protagonists, Jaffar and Silbad, bear stylized resemblance to Gir's Lt. Blueberry and his sidekick.

Once Moebius' two-and-a-half month work was completed, the realization of the decor and background was divided among a group of five French artists. Faique, a most sought-after hyper-realist illustrator in advertising, applied his expertise to the creation of Jaffa's space vessel, the Astronef; André Moons and Seraphie Claeys were commissioned as the graphic horticulturists for the Dolong Forest of the planet Peride and the surrounding terrain; Sylvaine Peycles specialized in landscaping Peride's hostile environment, the planet Gamma 10 and Silbad's palatial lakeside estate on the planet Devil's Ball. Ambrosia Sinner was called in to airbrush all the necessary highlights.

Unlike Laloux's former film, *Le Planète Sauvage,* which covers the events of 30 years, the *Time Masters* adventure takes place within a month, with a subplot involving a 60-year time warp.

The film's opening sequences take place on the surface of the sparsely vegetated planet of Peride, where Claude and his son Piel are being pursued in the spiderlike land cruiser, l'Aragne, by the Freions, a swarm of carnivorous hornets. As the chromed cruiser zooms along the semi-barren terrain toward the sanctuary of the multicolored Dolong forest, Claude attempts to send an SOS to his closest friend, Jaffa, in a space vessel light years away on the other side of the galaxy. An upturned jagged root punctures one of the vehicle's wheels, sending it rushing. Claude is stuck in the debris. Realizing that death is imminent, he releases his son from the overturned vehicle's cockpit and sends the reluctant child off with an intergalactic microtransmitter beamed to the vessel above, minutes before Claude meets his death by the swarm.

Across the galaxy, Jaffa, who is transporting the prince Matton and his companion Belle and the public treasury that Matton has stolen, hears the message and detours without hesitation to Preide to rescue the child. In order to make it in time, the pilot decides to hitch a ride on the gravitational pull of the passing Blue Comet. To align himself with the comet's passing, Jaffar heads towards Devil's Ball, an asteroid oasis of illuminous lakes, geysers and multicolored flora. The asteroid's guardian, a metal-domed old codger named Silbad, who knows Peride well from his own stay there as a child, volunteers to join the trio, transmitting information to Piel to aid his survival on the hostile planet. Dur-

**Clockwise from left: Prince Matton is about to sacrifice his life for Jaffa; a motley crew volunteer to join Jaffa in his attempt to save Piel; Jaffa consults with Silbad on a strategy and the gnomes help Jaffa escape.**

ing their brief stay on the Devil's Ball, the trio are privy to one of the asteroid's natural wonders, the metamorphoses of the Megeres, little telepathic gnomes born in the water lilies of Devil's Ball. Two of the gnomes, Jad and Yula, decide to see the vast universe beyond Devil's Ball and become stowaways of Jaffa's ship.

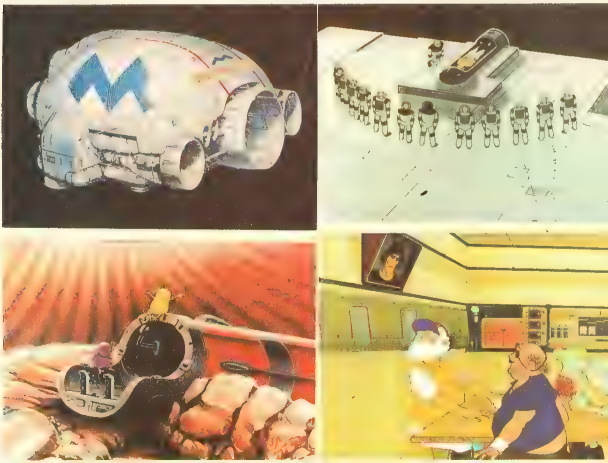
Aboard the Astronef, Prince Matton, perturbed by the inconvenience of the detour, decides to drown Piel by guiding him (via the microtransmitter) to the brink of one of Peride's lakes, but he is stopped in time by the intervention of Belle. Meanwhile, the gnomes have "smelled" the Prince's putrid thoughts and jettison his treasure into the dark void of outer space. Resolved to escape by one means or another, the Prince takes off in the ship's space shuttle to the surface of the planet Gamma 10, with Jaffa and the gnomes in pursuit. On Gamma 10, the two humans are captured by the XULs, former space pirates who have been changed into faceless winged men by the malignant force Magma. Fortunately for all, it is Prince Matton's act of self-sacrifice that saves Jaffa and returns the pirates to their original forms.

Freed, the rescue mission is once again impeded. First by the mercenaries of the reform government, who are looking for Matton and the stolen treasury, and then by a magnetic storm, which leaves the crew unconscious and Silbad on the threshold of death. Awakening, the passengers find themselves on the hospital ship of the Time Masters, a race of extraterrestrials who colonize civilizations by projecting themselves 10 years into a planet's past, in order to reconstruct its future. And what of the future of Piel, who is at this time being descended upon by the hornets of Peride?

As is often the case, there were several changes made in the transition from book to screen. The most evident were the name changes, staring with the title. Producer Laloux had originally preferred to use the book's title for the film because it appealed to his more romantic nature. However, he was outvoted by the production team who felt that the title *Time Masters* was more commercial in the science fiction vein and that a title with *Orphan* in it wouldn't go over well with the distributors.

The same was true for the names of the characters and the film's plot. Piel, Jaff and Prince Matton were originally Claude, Max and Prince Martin . . . and Belle is the prince's wife. Prince Martin is also not as altruistic in the original story and meets his demise at the hands of the space pirates. As for Max/Jaffa, due to his own miscalculation, he arrives 60 years too late to save the young Claude/Piel. However, as fate, time and space would have it, the child is saved by a scientific expedition minutes before being ravaged by the killer hornets. This leaves the child with amnesia and what becomes of him is the book's clincher. As for the cartoony fauna seen throughout the film, the Ouin-Ouins, the Couveux, and the telepathic gnomes, they were the fabrication of René Laloux's imagination.

At the suggestion of *Métal Hurlant* editor Jean-Pierre Dionnet, French



**Clockwise from left: Matton's pursuers' vessel, Silbad's body about to be jettisoned into space; Silbad and crew receive a transmission and on Gamma 10, Jad (yellow) and Yula (purple) go to help Jaffa.**

author/scenarist Jean Patrick Manchette was called in to handle the film's dialogue. Remaining faithful to the Laloux adaptation, Manchette jokingly described his job as that of a plumber who comes in to install the hot water and bathtub in a new apartment. There were some scenes that he found objectionable for young audiences, such as Silbad's graphic description of the Sarpiles—small worms that slither under the fingernail, then expand to the point where the members burst, influenced by Kubrick's *2001*. There was also an alternative ending to the film in which Jaffa and Belle go off together and the two gnomes metamorphose into embryo life forms capable of living within the vacuum of outer space, bidding the humanoids farewell with, "There are many things to see in the Universe, but we'll be back one day."

Once the Manchette dialogue was finished, it was then translated into English for distribution to the larger international English-speaking movie market. It was then retranslated into French and rearranged so that the dialogue would synchronize with the characters' lips. Minor alterations were made in the animation to fit. If that wasn't enough, an American version was dubbed in using current colloquialisms and jargon to ensure U.S. distribution.

With the film's pre-production problem somewhat resolved, next came the problem of the actual animation. Unlike those of the U.S., French and many of the western European studios do not have the money or the facilities to produce the "full" animation effects that are associated with the Disney studio or the special effects of the Ralph Bakshi school of film making. During World War II, while studios in the States continued working, experimenting and evolving, many of the European studios were forced to stop production altogether. Other studios stayed alive by producing publicity spots and commercials that were shown in the movie theaters. When the war ended, the cartoons that had been made during the war years (like Tex Avery films) flooded the entertainment-starved western European market, thus wiping out much of the competition. Because they were done as "throw aways" by larger, financially secure movie companies such as MGM, American animators had access to sound libraries, materials and facilities which were not possible in Western Europe. In a manner of speaking, everything had to be done from scratch.

There was also the very real problem of finance. In the U.S., a turnover is considered over a two- to three-year period. In France, it is calculated on a six-month period, and it is the complexity of each character moving simultaneously on the screen that cuts into the film's budget. It was for this reason that *Time Masters* was done as a Common Market co-production involving West German TV, Suisse Romande Television, French Television One, and the BBC, in collaboration with Pannonia Filmstudio and Hungarofilm. This decision was made after it became evident that with the costs involved, the project could not be done in France; and after researching other possibilities in Japan, Australia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the only feasible choice was Hungary. The studio that had been selected, Pannonia, had a reputation for making animated children's films. Among their achievements were *Animalia*, directed by Tibor Hernandi (who eventually animated the Ouin-Ouins, the Couveux and the Frelons) and Ferenc Rofusz's 1979 Oscar winner *La Mouche*.

*'The film had a positive direction because [it] dealt with doing away with a militant fascist force.'*

To complete the project, 110 people were involved, 45 of whom were on a permanent basis. Among the animators was Jose Habel, who had just finished work on the *Heavy Metal* movie.

One of Laloux's major headaches was the gnomes. They were first given to an apprentice to work on. However, there were difficulties in getting the two characters to move properly. It was then that Laloux realized that, although the two appeared to be simple entities without mouths, they had to express themselves in a manner similar to mime, which made them more complicated than expected. They were eventually taken over by animator Zoltan Marcos, whose experience and expertise made the two gnomes one of the film's highlighted events.

With the exception of an underwater sequence, there is no rotoscoping in the film. Laloux's personal feeling is that it should be used as an instrument of work, a means to an end and not as the finished product itself. He feels that up until now rotoscoping has been improperly used. He also has misgivings about the use of the multiplane camera that was invented by the Disney Studio for *Pinocchio*. He believes that much time is lost in preparation and execution and that good design, well shadowed, is as equally valid.

Political ideology was another problem encountered by the animation crew. During the filming of the XULs, the faceless angels who think and reason as one after being transformed by the Magma force, Communist Party observers decided to oversee the operation. It was eventually explained to them that the film had a positive direction because the sequence dealt with doing away with a militant fascist force. Laloux later commented that he was certain that the dialogue in Hungary would greatly differ from the original Manchette one.

Handling the film's musical score were Pierre Tardy and Christian Zanesi, two electronic music innovators who show a great influence by Stockhausen, Pierre Henry and Paremesian. The two had been originally requested to create synthesized voices for the gnomes. Eventually the producer dropped the idea because the electronic voices made the text incomprehensible and instead he used children's voices. The team was then asked to take over the film's musical score and special sound effects instead. (The more conventional theme song was composed by Jean-Pierre Boyard with lyricist Jacques Lanzman.)

For the sound effects, simplicty was the name of the game. With the aid of sound mixer André Nodin, Tardy and Zanesi combined the reel with the real. For example, when the team realized that one fly in an overturned glass, even electronically augmented, did not sound like a swarm of angry hornets, they opted for the next best thing . . . onions frying in a pan, recorded at a distance of two meters and compressed electronically for density of mass.

Last March, six years after Laloux originally conceived the idea to do the film, *Time Masters* premiered with much fanfare in French movie theaters. And if nothing else the result has been controversial among those who have seen it.

One way or the other, the film's impact will be as influential on American animated movies as was the "nouvelle vague" on American live action cinema during the 1960's. Time will tell. ■

*Anthony Clarke is a freelance writer currently living in France.*

IT WAS FORETOLD THAT ENGLAND'S GREATEST CHAMPION WILL RETURN IN THE HOUR OF HER GREATEST NEED.
IT IS THE YEAR 3000.
THAT TIME HAS COME.
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Guest Spot

# Redefining the Undergrounds

By DENIS KITCHEN

*Editor's Note: A long time writer/artist for the undergrounds, Denis Kitchen has gone on to form one of the big three underground publishing companies today: Kitchen Sink Press. In addition to printing a wide selection of u.g.s such as Howard Cruse's* Gay Comix *and* Bop, *Kitchen Sink is also publishing* The Spirit, *keeping Will Eisner's creation fresh in our minds.*

What *are* "underground" comix?

Certainly no one can argue that America's comix are underground in the same sense that wartime resistance fighters are underground or that Poland's Solidarity newsletters are underground. Strictly speaking, the term is a misnomer. After all, despite court tests and periods of general or regional paranoia, "underground" comix are sold openly and legally.

Alternative comix sprang from the same late '60s anti-war counterculture that produced grass roots underground newspapers in scores of American cities. The highly political newspapers were—or seemed to be—truly underground and the adjective in question was accepted by both those who consumed the radical papers and those who scorned them. Likewise, the comic books that grew out of this same general youth culture or counterculture were also tagged "underground," even though the comix were rarely as overtly political as the newspapers.

Virtually all of the underground newspapers have died, but the hardy comix that grew out of the same period continue to be produced. 1982 marks the 15th year since Robert Crumb's first *Zap* appeared, an anniversary which alone dispels any notion that underground comix were merely a hippie fad. It is much more complicated than that.

The generation of young cartoonists developing in the late '60s grew up with a love/hate attitude toward comic books. We obviously loved the medium itself, admired the top talents and treasured our stash of well-worn favorites. But, particularly as we left our teens, we became tired of the trite formulas and the many limits that seemed inherent in the bigtime comics biz. We were also angry to learn how comic artists had traditionally been ripped off. Many of us vowed to go it on our own, for better or worse. Artists with similar thoughts emerged from every corner of the country.

The early underground comix let loose a graphic fury. They were anti-establishment, outrageous and rude. And they had absolutely nothing in common with "straight" comics.

Since then, the big companies have grown more responsive to comic fans, they have experimented more, loosened up to some degree, and are treating comics' creators more fairly. Meanwhile, the pioneer underground cartoonists have grown older and perhaps mellower and with a company like my own publishing the "respectable" *Spirit* magazine by Will Eisner alongside "undergrounds," the question could be posed (I have heard it): "Is there *really* that much of a difference between the groups anymore?" The question suggests that there are simply big companies and small companies. But of course it isn't that simple. There are, and will remain, fundamental differences.

At first glance there are format differneces. Undergrounds tend to have black and white interiors, often on a better grade paper, appear irregularly and retail these days for around $1.50. Mainstream comic books tend to be in color on newsprint, appear regularly, carry advertising, and retail for about 60¢. But these are superficial differences, and the formats of neither are rigid. More substantive differences can be found in three or four primary areas.

**STYLE.** Underground comix, above all else, are the creation of *individuals.* There is no assembly line of specialists here. In the great majority of cases, the underground artist writes, pencils, inks, letters and, when applicable, colors his or her own work. There is no "house style." There are no publisher-owned characters assigned and re-assigned to different people. In the underground comix world the individual artist's view of life or fantasy or sense of humor or outrage is solicited and encouraged. The results are idiosyncratic: sometimes a failure, sometimes self-indulgent, sometimes brilliant, but *always* the reflection of an unfettered individual. If the term "underground" conjures foreign or subversive imagery to you, remember that this genre's stress on the individual is no "radical" idea; it is an American hallmark.

Sure, true individuals emerge from time to time in mainstream comics and they tend to be fan favorites while they last. But they are the exception, not the rule. Assembly line creative methods and corporate properties, by definition, stifle individual expression while undergrounds nourish it.

**FREEDOM.** Underground comix are not bound by the Comics Code Authority that restricts mainstream comics. Underground cartoonists may examine any subject to any degree. The inevitable exploration of sexual topics, drugs and unrestrained violence have caused many observers to narrowly typecast undergrounds around these subjects. That some artists utilize their freedom to shock or disgust their readers (with or without artistic or satiric purpose) will, of course, offend some. Those who do typecast undergrounds should be aware that most artists use their freedom responsibly. Ecological threats, white collar crime, health food, political satire, autobiography, sexism, atomic energy and world, national and regional histories are just a handful of subject areas that have been tackled by wide-ranging underground artists. The past 15 years have demonstrated that artists given full intellectual range do not hover neurotically around sex, drugs and violence. And of those that do dive into controversial waters,

many depict the sad effects of abuse and obsessions in the sexual arena, the unpleasant sides of drug use and deplore the ugliness of a violent world.

If comics as an art form are ever to be taken seriously, serious cartoonists require this freedom. The best contemporary authors, filmmakers and artists take this freedom for granted. The degree to which this freedom can be exploited will always be subject to artistic debate and prevailing national mores in a healthy society. It is always better to suffer or ignore (or enjoy, if you will) the unavoidable excesses a free medium produces in order to enjoy the overall richness and diversity of expression that results.

Trying to define underground comix as a whole is like trying to get a firm grasp on an egg yolk. The genre is best defined by the absolute freedom the creators have. To dwell on the "excesses" is to ignore the valuable and lasting contributions the field has made.

**ECONOMICS.** Creators of underground comix are paid on a royalty basis, as opposed to the flat page rate traditionally paid by the large comics publishers. The formula used to determine an underground artist's royalty is 10 percent x cover price of comic x total printed. This simple formula is repeated on any and all reprints. I am not suggesting that a typical underground artist earns *more* per page or per book than his or her mainstream counterpart. But an underground cartoonist still receives a larger share of the respective pie. More of each dollar brought in by an underground publisher is returned to the artist. The average Marvel or DC artist is paid an attractive page rate, perhaps triple or more that received by an underground artist on a first printing. But when longterm reprint residuals are counted, an underground artist's rate can equal or surpass the mainstream artist. The longterm royalties of a Robert Crumb or Gilbert Shelton underground, with multiple reprintings, can far exceed a *Spider-Man* or *Superman* artist's earning on a book at the flat rate.

Marvel and DC have recently implemented a bonus plan for the creators of their better-selling comics. I think that policy represents a very positive direction and a hard-won victory for artists and writers, and I applaud it. Employees of Marvel and DC and other large comics publishers must deal with entrenched policies and powers as best they can.

Besides a guaranteed royalty of 10 percent of the gross, underground artists retain the copyright on their work. They also retain their original art and all foreign and ancillary rights. These property rights are of elemental importance to any creator. Their longterm value outweighs the relatively smaller initial income an underground artist may receive. The examples of maverick cartoonists like Will Eisner and Milton Caniff who bucked the powerful syndicate system in the 1940's to won their characters have not been lost on this generation of comic art sts.

**DISTRIBUTION.** Distribution is of only indirect interest to an underground artist inasmuch as it is out of his or her control, yet critical to survival of the whole system. To an underground comix publisher like myself it is of paramount importance. Distribution used to be an area in which underground comix and mainstream comics barely overlapped at all.

In the "old days" our substantial distribution network was comprised primarily of "head shops," those subculture outposts where one could buy anything from comix and posters to bongs and beads. It also consisted of "hip" record stores, used book shops and a handful of then-rare comic book dealers. At that time the big comic book publishers were handled exclusively by the national periodical distributors. But the gradual decline of a clearly identifiable counterculture and the emergence of statewide anti-paraphernalia laws in many areas of the country have eroded deeply into our traditional turf. So, ironically, just as Marvel and DC have in recent years to rely more and more on the "direct market" distribution to the growing field of comics shops, so have we. And there's also a certain "problem."

The "problem" is that most comics specialty shops rely on the commercially popular Marvel and DC comics as their main drawing card, and these comics have a significant, if not primary, juvenile readership. Thus, many comics shop owners/managers are reluctant to carry undergrounds at all.

Fortunately, many of these specialty dealers are enthusiastic supporters and retailers of undergrounds. They display their underground comix under glass, behind the counters, or on the higher shelves, and never sell undergrounds to minors. Selling underground comix need be no more of a problem than that of the corner pharmacist who sells *Playboy* alongside the candy counter.

But too many other dealers do not make undergrounds accessible to their over-18 customers. This is largely due to the common typecasting discussed earlier. Many retailers do not have the time or inclination to read or even carefully examine the multitude of comix/comics being produced today. Many, under the assumption that undergrounds are pornographic or otherwise offensive per se, eliminate the whole genre from their inventory. Since this "direct market" is becoming the primary lifeblood to all comics publishers, it is especially critical that the small independents, including undergrounds, have full inroad to comic fans throughout the network. I want adult comic readers to have easy access to comix designed *for* adults. I hope that the owners and managers of the growing specialty shops realize the importance of displaying and maintaining a section of "underground" comix. If enough shops continue to ignore or boycott this important fringe, then undergrounds may not celebrate a 20th anniversary.

I also urge adult comics fans who have avoided undergrounds thus far—or never seen them—to investigate the field. As I have tried to suggest in the range available here, there is a wide range of subjects, styles and attitudes expressed in the underground field. To make a negative assumption about the whole field is as wrong as saying crime comics or romance or juvenile delinquency, superhero comics are all the same, or comic book readers are simple-minded. Try to set aside any prejudices you might have toward the inadequate term "underground" and check out the selection in your local comics shop or from your favorite mail order dealer. There are all kinds of music, all kinds of food and all kinds of comic books. Don't let narrow tastes or assumptions cheat yourself out of a new discovery or experience. ■

# An Informal Chat With
# BURNE HOGARTH
# The World's Greatest Living Comics Artist

By HOWARD ZIMMERMAN

*Burne Hogarth took over the* Tarzan *syndicated newspaper strip from the great Hal Foster in 1936. He was only 25 years old at the time, but he had already been a professional cartoonist/illustrator for 10 years. Hogarth helmed the strip for a decade, creating an awesome and unique visual mythos. He helped take* Tarzan *out of the cult closet and firmly established the ape-man as one of the true greats of American heroic literature and mythology. Although this was just one achievement of a long, successful career, recognition was a long time coming for Hogarth. Today however, he is generally acknowledged as "the greatest living artist of the comics."**

*We caught up with Hogarth at home in southern California and chatted with him about his career, his contributions to the art world and his views on dynamic illustration.*

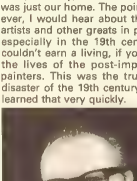
**COMICS SCENE:** Give us a capsule history of your career and early background. You graduated from the Chicago Art Institute?

**HOGARTH:** No, I didn't, as a matter of fact. I went to the Institute but it was only a kind of supplemental activity while I was really in the process of going to high school and at the same time doing art work.

I went to the Art Institute, started Saturday classes, at the age of 12. My father thought that I had sufficient material to be able to enroll in classes like that and so he took down a bundle of stuff one day, on a Saturday, and said "Let's go see what they will think about this." And they accepted me—so that's how my training began. Later I went to the Institute taking special courses, but I didn't enroll in any formal classes. I couldn't because we were not an affluent family and [the world] was headed into what was later to be known as the Great Depression.

**CS:** What were you interested in learning?

**BH:** Well, to put it simply, I wanted to be an artist, but at the same time, I was committed very early to doing cartoons. You see, in our home we had a connection with artists, because they used to come to the house—it was a kind of center of artistic concerns. It was almost like what might have happened perhaps in other days ... in Paris, let's say, like in a salon, only it was just our home. The point is, however, I would hear about the lives of artists and other greats in past times, especially in the 19th century. You couldn't earn a living, if you went by the lives of the post-impressionist painters. This was the truly human disaster of the 19th century culture. I learned that very quickly.



So it occurred to me that cartooning might be one way to earn a living, and I would also set some time aside to do painting and artwork.

**CS:** When did you know you had a talent for cartooning?

**BH:** Very early, when I was a kid, about four. My father would sit and design furniture and cabinets—he was a carpenter and cabinet maker—and I would ask for my own piece of paper and and pencil. And when I would say "What should I draw?" he would push a cartoon under my nose and say, "Here, draw this." So the cartoon became a kind of focus of attention.

**CS:** What happened after you left the Art Institute?

**BH:** I enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago. There I studied further drawing and then cartooning as another side of that. That's when I met a cartoonist who was working for a syndicate and other people who were working for newspapers, and we used to get heavily into what syndication was all about ... deadlines and magazines and doing samples and taking them around. I did gags and editorial cartoons, illustrations and that was all part of my portfolio.

I used to take this around and get some jobs in magazines and at the same time worked at odd jobs—just sheer work jobs like driving a truck, selling newspapers and shoes—nothing was too high, too low, or too intermediate to do, because there was obviously an economic necessity.

One of the people I met at the Academy introduced me to one of the syndicates. I worked [for them] in his studio and I was his assistant. I was just an apprentice. I used to come in and sweep up. I learned lettering and I learned also there's something about the craft of doing work on deadlines. And more than anything else I learned how to use pen, brush, different media and all sorts of things in a very professional way. Maybe two and a half, three years later I sold my first feature, to Bonnet Brothers.

**CS:** Which one was that?

**BH:** *Ivy Hemmanhaw.* It was one panel, humourous gags about Americana. I was just 18. It lasted about a year and then I went on to teach in the Emergency Educational Program, which came along about the time I was 20-21, and I went to school, too. I went to Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, and studied psychology, anatomy, sectional anatomy, and then things altered. The Depression got worse and under the urging of friends who had relocated to New York, I made my foray into the field in New York, into the syndicate field, very quickly—and that became the start of a whole new

**The World Encyclopedia of Comics,* by Maurice Horn

and different part of my life.

**CS:** You worked for the King and McNaught syndicates, worked with Charles Driscoll on his *Pieces of Eight* strip. How did you get the job doing *Tarzan*?

**BH:** I was working for the Johnstone Agency, I did comic ads, and from there I learned there was an opening for a possible comic book or comic strip in United Features. And this was back in 1936. I had a couple of cartoons and ready-to-be-syndicated strip ideas which I wanted to submit. The editor looked at it and he said, "Well, we're thinking of doing a comic book"—he said it was a kind of new idea. Well, it *was* a new idea then. It was the beginning of the idea of the comic book. But then he said they were contemplating changing one of their major features, and he said "Perhaps you'd like to take a crack at it, we're simply gathering samples together." I said I'd like to listen to anything you'd like me to do. So he trotted out some samples of Harold Foster's *Tarzan*. He said "Harold Foster is going to be leaving *Tarzan*—he's going on to do his own feature and we're looking to see who can replace him. Maybe you'd like a crack at it." Well I was bowled over by this. I was literally bowled over, because Foster was really a god of the comics. But he gave me some material and a script. He said here are some pages that show what [Foster] did in relation to the script. He said "We want you to do this one, and you are going to do it on your own." So I took it home and two weeks later I returned with a finished page. He looked at it and he said "Okay, we'll let you know."

I just did the page according to Foster's samples—which were of course pages with rough notes. Anyway, what happened was that, I hadn't realized it, but there were something like 11 other artists who were competing for the job. I was interviewed and he called me about a week later and he said, "Well, I think the job is yours."

**CS:** What was it about your work that sold them?

**BH:** There was a continuity in the style, in the black and white and in everything else. But the more important thing was in the design of the page. I didn't realize at the time that Foster *had* done this page—they told me he hadn't—but when they laid down the pages side by side. . . . The editor told me that he walked into the syndicate manager's office and he put my page down in front of the head of the syndicate and said, "Well, Foster sent in a page, what do you think of it?" And the guy looked at it and he scanned it from top to bottom. He said, "It looks alright to me." He says, "Print it." And at that point, the editor said, I knew we'd won the game. And so they hired me.

**Two posters by Hogarth. Top: In describing the composition, he states, "as each shape bulges outward, it receives more light; as it curves back, it moves into shadow." Above: This poster "exploits the clarity of sculptural light to create a sense of tension and danger. The light reveals every detail, every form, so that all essential elements are visible."**

**CS:** You started out doing the Sunday pages?

**BH:** Yes. And, as I mentioned earlier, it was my intention that I would do the comics for a living, give it the damned best I could. I'd spend three, at the most four, days on the cartoon, make a good living out of it, if possible, and use the rest of the week for my own stuff—which is what I continued to do as a matter of fact ever since that time. I never let myself become so infected by the habit of doing hack work and multiple hack work that I would just simply forget what the heck art was all about.

Frequently when I talk to some artists they expatiate on ideas, like, you know, "You take some of these new artists and they have all kinds of time that they spend on one page. They'll spend two weeks, three weeks on a page of stuff, and they give it whatever they think they are giving, but you know the field demands so much intensity that if they can't get production, what good are they?" And I say, "Yeah, but what good is the art is you have to give it everything you have in the first five seconds and you haven't got time to think about it—or even look beyond whatever it is that you want it to be?"

I say there is something admirable about those people who merely want to linger over it and polish it and sort of acculturate themselves with the whole process of the field, rather then to simply ingest it as if it were a thing that you eat and get out of your body and get rid of the refuse. I said "That's not art to me." And I admire the people who are capable . . . well, you can name a few people . . . there's [Michael] Kaluta, who likes to linger over his work, and there are others, like Barry Smith.

**CS:** How long did you linger over the *Tarzan* Sundays?

**BH:** Well, at first it took me about five,

Tarzan
by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
THE DUEL
NOW IN OR DER ALLEAH SCREAMED HIS NAME BY WAY OF SIGNAL AND AWAIT ANSWER.
AND IN A FAIR DUEL"---FIGHT FIGHT CRIED AN EXCITED CHORUS. "HER WILL ILL FIGHT---AND CONQUER," ALLEAH BOASTED.
THEN SHE SEIZED TARZAN AND DROPPED DOWN THROUGH THE TREES. HE OFFERED NO RESISTANCE.
CLEFFELD THE TARZAN-WOMEN RUSHED DOWN TO WORSHIP THE GODS.
AND CHOOSE WISELY," SAID ANOTHER. "FOR A LIFE-TIME THE PRIVILEGE OF OUR MIGHTY RACE."
"A WOMAN WHO ALLEAH HAD A" TARZAN WHEN
THE AMAZONS SWARMED WITH EXCITEMENT. ALLEAH ROSE UP RAGING. BEFORE SHE HAD PLANNED TO DESTROY OR CLAIM HER OPPONENT. BUT NOW---
---SHE MEANT TO KILL HIM---IN FAIR MEANS OR FOUL!
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Tarzan
by EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
THE MYSTERIOUS CAVERN
TARZAN RACED OUT THE OPENING. TARZAN TRIED TO ELUDE THE GRASP OF THE CLINGING VINES.
TARZAN SCRAMBLED TOWARD THE TREE. MOMENTARILY FOR BEING WITH THE CREATURE HE RECOGNIZED A CAVE, CONCEALED BY BRUSH. WAS IT THE DEN OF A BEAST?
TARZAN SNIFFED WARILY. WHATEVER DWELT WITHIN ITS SCENT WAS VELVET BY A SHARP ODOR OF BUILDING GASES.
THE APE-MAN HESITATED BUT NOT FOR LONG. HIS PURSUERS WERE HOT ON HIS TRAIL.
HE CRAWLED INTO THE MYSTERIOUS CAVERN, WHICH GLOWED WITH A PALE, GREEN LIGHT.
UNDER THE IMPACT TARZAN YELL TAWNY WAS JOLTED LOOSE FROM HIS BACK.
THE WARRIORS WERE PUZZLED BY THEIR QUARRY'S DISAPPEARANCE.
IF HE ENTERED THE CAVE OF HORRORS, ONE SHUDDERED THE FATE AWAITING HIM THERE.
THUS HE KNEW HE WAS A FIGHT FOR LIFE WITH A WORTHY PERHAPS SUPERIOR OPPONENT.
HOGARTH

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maybe six days a week. You know I was really walking a tightrope. Here I'm dealing with a guy who's a seasoned editor, who had been an illustrator himself for many years. And I was just a fledgling and I had to go try to equal the output of a guy like Harold Foster, whom I read as a kid and just loved—fell in love with the kind of dramatics, the dynamics and all the rest that went on in that kind of projection drawing. Because where else did anybody ever draw as well as that just by sitting down and spinning it off the top of his head? You know, that's really virtuoso stuff. Most people don't comprehend the difficulty of the comic strip. There's nothing to copy, nothing to follow, at the same time the thing is always on the move and always realistic. I never used a model and I'm pretty sure that Harold Foster never did.

**CS:** How many years did you do the Sunday continuities?

**BH:** Well, I believe I left the strip in '46.

**CS:** So we're talking about a 10-year period. Did you get involved in the School of Visual Arts then?

**BH:** That happened in '47. I started the Academy of Newspaper Art first and then the Cartoonists and Illustrators School and so on. And then I founded the SVA with a person who is an administrator with the Veteran's Administration—an English teacher who had no art training at all.

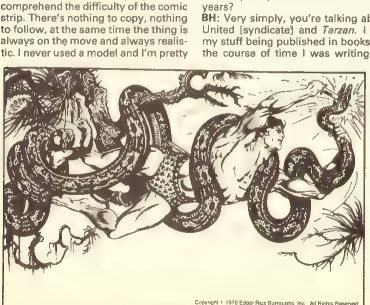
**CS:** Why did you leave *Tarzan* after 10 years?

**BH:** Very simply, you're talking about United [syndicate] and *Tarzan*. I had my stuff being published in books—in the course of time I was writing the thing and drawing it—and a lot of it was being published in many editions overseas. The way they are even today. I've got a bundle of things I picked up in a store the other day . . . about six books and they butchered the art and ruined the color.

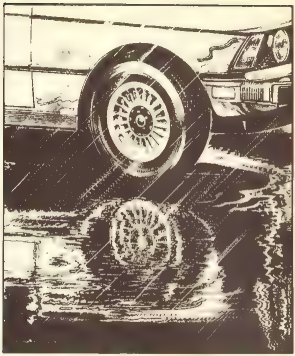
Anyway, here were these books being published, hundreds of thousands of them, and I wasn't getting a single penny in royalties. I said I'd like to share it, when my contract came up. They said they'd give me some syndication percentage, or whatever, but the books were the real thing and I decided I wasn't going to go with their offer. And I walked out.

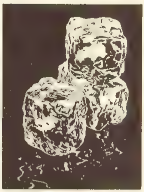
**CS:** You returned to the strip a year or so later.

**BH:** Yes, but then they tied on the daily. It was an advance in money, but




**Top Left: "Complete Form." In this figure, "each form is rendered as a complete entity. The whole figure shows central lights and shadowy edges on all the shapes." Top right: The interplay of the muscles of the back of the leg. Left: "Light in Motion." Another page from *Jungle Tales*, it's used to illustrate kinetic light. "The lines of kinetic light suggest speed and thrust as the knife is driven with great force into the reptile's skull. The frozen image printed on the page does, indeed, *seem* to move; the arm swings and the snake recoils."**





**All of the graphics on this page are from Hogarth's most recent text, *Dynamic Light and Shade*. Each is used to illustrate a different aspect of using shadows and half-tones to dramatic effect. Top left: A page from *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*, included to illustrate the use of differing textures in juxtaposition. Also note how the shapes of the different elements complement each other. Above: An example of "Fragmentation Light." Hogarth describes it as "an instantaneous or momentary effect of reflected light that suggests disrupted or dispersed form." Far left: "Flamelight." Says Hogarth, "the lamp emits sparkling rays, producing marked contrasts of light and shadow on the figure." Left: "Ice Cubes"**

**A series of drawings showing "high-contrast edge light, the dramatic and powerful effect known as chiaroscuro." Each illustration has a light source that is slightly different in angle.**

COMICS scene

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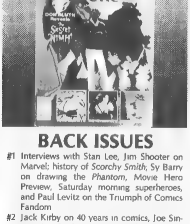

BACK ISSUES

#1 Interviews with Stan Lee, Jim Shooter on Marvel; history of Scorchy Smith, Sy Barry on drawing the *Phantom*, Movie Hero Preview, Saturday morning superheroes, and Paul Levitz on the Triumph of Comics Fandom

#2 Jack Kirby on 40 years in comics, Joe Sinnott, Jim Starlin interviews, John Byrne on creators' rights, David and Leslie Newman on writing for the movies, Carl Barks book preview, and of course, *Judge Dredd!*

#3 Don Bluth reveals *The Secret of NIMH*, Frank Miller on comics today, Bob Layton on *Hercules*; Bil Stout on storyboarding *Conan*; Len Wein on *Swamp Thing*, Osamu Tezuka part one, Jack Katz part one, and *Dick Tracy* turns 50

#4 Marvel's creators talk about the *Conan* comics, Conan photo preview and merchandising news, Richard and Wendy Pini with publishing tips, *is Legion* fandom dead?, learn to letter comics, *Prince Valiant* and *Barney Google*; and Gene Colan part one

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**From *Jungle Tales*, an example of a landscape with light in the middleground. "The light carries the eye to the middle distance, where the action occurs."**

they tied on the supervision of the daily *and* I was doing the Sunday page. And I was into the School of Visual Arts in a very deep way. There, by the way, I had a *really* full schedule! I wrote all the courses; the whole supervision of the art scene was mine; I was hiring the instructors and so on, putting together a school that got to be bigger than we could handle. Sometimes success really runs quite far away from you. I just had to let something go at that point and I said good-bye to the *Tarzan* feature, because they wouldn't let me just dump the daily.

**CS:** So you left *Tarzan* again and gave your full attention to SVA.

**BH:** Well, I began doing art instruction books. One day a buyer from Barnes and Noble told me that Watson-Guptill was looking for an anatomy book—did I want to take it on? I said, "Gee whiz, yeah!" But when I got the feedback that they really did want my book, I said to myself, "Am I going to do an anatomy book?" I'd never thought about it. So I sat down to think about it and I said, "Well, why not!" Cause I'd been teaching it—so I sat down to think about what it should be and my first thought was, "I'm going to write a book that will be different from any other." And the book I did, the title was *Dynatomy*. But my editor said that people wouldn't understand that term—we'll call it *Dynamic Anatomy*. So that was the title I went with.

I began to think in terms of all the things that I'd been doing, that I never saw in any book that I had access to. And some of them were really good books, like George Bridgeman. Bridgeman is really a classic anatomist in the tradition of Michaelangelo, but he is not an anatomist in the tradition of the 20th century. He does beautiful carvings of figures that are pillars . . . supporting devices for the roof of a building. They're not things that move, they are not light as air.

Michaelangelo's Captives are prisoners of the stone, and what I wanted to do was free [the human figure] from its gravitational plane. I began to create multi-figure sequences of movement through space. I invented ways of seeing foreshortening in terms of elliptical devices, such as the pivot of the shoulder and the elbow.

I developed a system that George Bridgeman never thought of. I created a book with a total concept. I created the book color-wise and texture-wise—it was terra-cotta and black like the Greek vases. I used bald heads so they wouldn't be caught up in hair styles. I designed the book with a total flow. The book won an award from the American Association of Graphic Artists, one of the 50 best designed

books of the year.

**CS:** Watson-Guptill published your other three illustrated texts, *Dynamic Figure Drawing, Drawing the Human Head* and *Drawing Dynamic Hands,* and more recently, *Dynamic Light and Shade.* But they also published the two *Tarzan* books, that you did in the '70s. How d d that come about?

**BH:** They wanted me to come back and do *something.* I said great, let's do a book. They asked me what I wanted to do, so I just went through every book that Burroughs had written and I said, "We'll do *Tarzan of the Apes.* And the next one has got to be *Jungle Tales.*" And we did four stories out of the 12. I really went to town—I had a marvelous t me doing it. But the point, strictly speaking, is that I think they are landmark books.

**CS:** You actually got to do the "ultimate comic."

**BH:** Yeah, and in that ultimate comic . . . if we ever get a chance to get into these books. I'll show you some symbolism that no one else has ever really done.

**CS:** And having achieved that, you never really had the desire to work in the regular four-color comic books?

**BH:** No. To me that's just an introduction to the form and not really the mature end. And maturity is what we need. We need not only mature practitioners, but we need mature writers. There is so little material put out for the adult audience and there is such a large adult population. That's why I say the artist has to be better prepared but the writer even more so. We need a whole new generation. And, predictably, the more intelligently educated and more intense personalities in the art phase, balanced by an extremely sensitive and comprehending writer component, will create a future for this field that will simply outdistance any other. It will then take its place as one of the really decisive art forms of the 21st century.

**CS:** Tell us something of your future projects.

**BH:** My next project, hopefully, is a comic strip which I hope to market. I haven't drawn it, but I've written it. It's really a funny, funny one. A damn good one too. I don't dare tell you what it is, but I'm in the process of writing a letter and just about ready to send it off to a syndicate editor who wants to see it.

The other thing is, I've got 10 panels—already drawn in pencil and two inked—of the life of King Arthur, in a collectors' edition, ready to go. They're ten plates done on full-sized sheets of, you know, like illustration board. Anc after that, who knows? I've been working on a major figure who exists in mythology to do a story about. Kind of a biblical, metaphoric-analog figure. And I've just completed a scenario for the movies—a screen treatment is now in the hands of some responsible people.

**CS:** What about going back to teaching art?

**BH:** Well, I can go into Otis and talk to the director there. I was teaching at Parson's before I left [New York] and Parson's owns Otis. So I have a standing appointment to walk in at any time and say hello. And, if I want to, maybe pick up a job in their teaching schedule. I'm not sure I want to do that, but I will investigate it and see where it leads. Really, as far as teaching is concerned, I'd rather spend my time creating, cause teaching is really a lot of extra time and work.

**CS:** Besides, you've already produced the teaching materials.

**BH:** Yeah, and that was one of the damned hardest things I ever did. What else can I tell you about what my intentions are? It's so wide open. I've got some paintings I'd like to paint, and [finished studies] are just sitting there, ready to sort of scale up on to the canvas. So the next time you come back you'll get to see some paintings.

**CS:** Thank you, Burne. Now, if I can just think of some way to get my publisher to pay for another trip. ■


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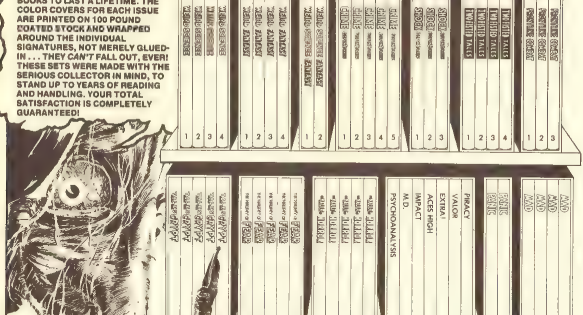
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# Panels and Frames

## *The relationship between film and comics; the how and why of adapting one to the other*

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

From the earliest days of the comics industry, the field has borrowed from film: plots, characters, terminology and viewpoint. In an interview in Jim Steranko's *History of the Comics*, Jack Kirby talked of spending a day at the movies in the early '30s and returning to his drawing board, trying to re-create on paper what he'd seen on the screen. Many top artists in the early days, like Kirby, Will Eisner, and Milt Caniff, were and are hailed for their "cinematic" approach to comics. This approach remains alive today, through the work of Steranko himself, Pau Gulacy and Frank Miller, among others.

Almost from the beginning, the film industry has recognized its relationship with comics, finding in the four-color pages a source for new material. There were silent film versions of *Mutt and Jeff* before 1920, and during the '30s and '40s hardly a year went by that some serial studio did not produce an adaptation of a comic-book hero. Indeed, Republic's *Adventures of Captain Marvel* and *Spy Smasher* chapter-plays are considered among its top product by serial fans today.

That trend continues today as well. Television has, in recent years, given us *Wonder Woman* and *The Incredible Hulk*, and millions of people, not all of them comics fans, have trooped to movie houses for *Superman* and *Superman II*. This spring saw the release of Benjamin Melniker and Michael Uslan's production of *Swamp Thing*, based on the DC Comics fan-favorite. The same team now has a *Batman* film in pre-production.

And the adaptations run in both directions. Throughout the '40s and '50s, comics publishers contracted with film producers for the rights to do adaptations of forthcoming movies. Beginning with the hugely successful adaptation of *Star Wars*, Marvel has vigorously pursued a policy of doing film adaptations. Initially they met with mixed success when films such as *Meteor, Xanadu* and *Jaws 2* failed to perform as well as expected. Last year, they produced adaptations of three summer films, *Raiders of the*

I THINK I'LL SAVE THE BEAUTIFUL ONE BEFORE I'M THROUGH!
I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU, CONAN!
WAIT!
AND NOW, YOU KNOW DO THE APPRAISAL TRY OUT ARE BEGINNING!
FROM THE GLOWERING EYES OF ONE WHO HAS NO NAME!
CRASH! THUNDER!
FANGS WHICH HITS WHERE THE SKIN MEETS THE NECK! THE DEATH STRIKE!
ONLY HEROIC FOLK TO BE IN THIS SCENE!
THAT ONE WAS TRUE!
THAT ONE IS AS GOOD AS GONE! I'LL GIVE THAT ONE FIVE MINUTES TO BLEED TO DEATH!

**Movie adaptations have been a part of comics for decades. They only became popular recently as a result of *Star Wars'* popularity. Marvel went full speed ahead with adaptations including this summer's *Conan*. This sequence is from the Tower of the Serpent.**

©1982 BERKLEY MEDALLION PRODUCTIONS

PHOTO © 1981 LADD CO

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***Blade Runner*** **Rick Deckard clings for his life, above, in this climactic scene from the current Rodley Scott film. At left is a page from the Marvel adaptation by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson.**

*Lost Ark* (about to be turned into regular comic adventures by John Byrne), *Dragonslayer* and *For Your Eyes Only*. The 1982 schedule includes the recently released *Annie, Blade Runner, Conan* and, later on, *Dark Crystal*.

Naturally, the comics creators who work in both fields have definite opinions on the relationship between comics and film. Marvel editor Denny O'Neil has written a script for the *Logan's Run* TV series, was the writer for the *Dragonslayer* adaptation, and edited the *For Your Eyes Only* comic. O'Neil finds the two fields very similar. "The actual business of writing a film or TV script is very much like the business of writing a comic-book script, if you start with the script first . . . Starting with a blank piece of paper, the end product of which is destined for a comic-book page, or starting with the same piece of paper and aiming it for a television screen, is a very similar process: You have to think of the image and then think of the dialogue that goes with it."

Marty Pasko, the writer on the current comics version of *Swamp Thing*, wrote Marvel's extension of the *Star Trek* film, a script of the first season of TV's *Buck's Rogers*, and now divides his time between writing comics and scripts for Ruby-Spears in Hollywood. Pasko finds the two media similar but with an important difference: "One moves, the other doesn't. And that makes a bigger difference than you might think. Comic books are essentially film in jump-cuts, film in which frames have been removed. There is a fluidity of movement necessary in film that you can't achieve in comics."

Alan Brennert is a film writer who recently began writing comics, beginning with a *Batman* story in Detective 500, which has received a lot of fan acclaim. (See Focus, page 18.) Brennert has written scripts for *Buck Rogers* and *Wonder Woman,* and he finds the two media similar in approach, but "I find writing film far easier than writing comic books. I put more time into writing my comic-book scripts. In a way, comics are almost like *haiku,* in that you have a certain number of panels per page and a certain number of words to fit in that panel. It's incredibly challenging to try and tell a dramatic story with some degree of characterization. *Haiku* is the closest thing I can think of to that kind of restriction."

But Archie Goodwin, editor of Marvel's *Epic Illustrated,* disagrees. Goodwin, who has written some of the most successful film comics *ALIEN* and *The Empire Strikes Back)* says he's never tried to write a screenplay, because "screenwriting . . . is a totally different craft from writing comics."

O'Neil and Pasko both feel that working in film has aided their comic book work. Pasko says, "When you have to write to act-breaks, as you do for live-action television (an act-break is the climax the story reaches before a commercial), you think of structure, if you haven't already done so, as a comic book writer, in ways that you hadn't before . . . I found ways to use that awareness of structure in my comic-book writing. Now when I sit down to plot a comic book, I think in terms of acts. I divide a novel-length comic into roughly four acts of, say, five pages each. So I try to have the story lead to three climaxes in the body of the story, with the major climax

being the third, before the donouement. I also find that I think of pages as units now, and try to construct the plot so we get out of scenes at the ends of pages, so when you're turning a page, or looking at the top of a page, you're looking at a new scene." And O'Neil feels a basic understanding of film is a plus in doing comics. "The best book I know for learning how to write comics is the Hitchcock/Truffaut book on film. There's almost nothing in there that you can't apply directly to writing comics." Even Brennert feels his early comics reading made him a better screenwriter, particularly for *Wonder Woman* and *Buck Rogers,* because he "was accustomed to thinking in terms of visual effects."

There is, however, dissension in the ranks on the subject of the film versions of comic-book characters. Denny O'Neil likes both *Superman* movies, although he thinks the emphasis on "camp" humor hurt the first film. O'Neil says the problem between the comic book and film creators hurt the process. "Comics fans tend to look at breaches in the character . . . [but the producers] don't feel bound by 30 years of back continuity. . . . What they are doing is translating. When you translate a poem, say, from Chinese to English . . . if you translate it literally, you get gobbledygook and garble. What you have to do is recreate the poem in your own language. It's very much the same way with adaptations. You have to recreate the material in your own medium. In doing that, they attempt to make good film, not necessarily good comic books. . . ." But O'Neil goes on to say that the movie producers are not entirely blameless. "A lot of times the people who deal with this [comic book] material, especially in television, don't like it. They have contempt for it, and it shows. . . . Often the people who are actually shooting this stuff—the writers, the actors, the directors—feel it is beneath them. They don't have any feel for the peculiar kind of fantasy we do. Even when that's not true . . . the money people still don't."

OH, MY GOODNESS
HE KNOWS!
I DID ARE PRETTY!
WHAT DOES HE WANT?
WANDA! WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE ACTING AS IF YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST!
SUPERMAN! WHAT'S HAPPENED?
I'LL TELL YOU LATER, HAROLD!
NOT QUITE ENOUGH, BY LITTLE BIG THUMPING, YOU'RE GOING TO THE CATTLE CALL!
AND THIS GOES TO "THE BACKBITING FILMS"
Burr Sutton
THE BOSS WANTS TO SEE YOU! NOW!
BOSS? SHOULD I BE WORRIED?
IF HIS MEGALOMANIA COMPLEX PERMITS, I'LL BE HOME FOR DINNER AT THE USUAL HOUR
I DON'T KNOW! I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM LIKE THIS BEFORE! HE'S ALWAYS A CALMLY BEHAVED, EVEN WHEN HE'S FURIOUS AND RAVES.

**The evil Miss Hannigan goes out of her way to make *Annie's* life miserable especially when Sandy shows up Marvel's adaptation is just one of many publications to support the film.**

ART © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

Alan Brennert agrees with O'Neil's reasoning, but disagrees about the *Superman* films. "I'm probably in the minority, but I didn't like either film. The first is horribly disjointed. The Krypton sequence is done in this high-blown, dramatic style; the Smallville sequence is actually quite nice . . . and then you get to Metropolis and it becomes a comedy, with Gene Hackman and Ned Beatty chewing the scenery. The second film is only marginally better." Brennert blames the attitude of the film people again, and offers an answer. "The people who make these things are embarrassed by what they're doing. . . . The solution is for the filmmakers to do what comics creators do: create a world where these weird things do happen, where people with superpowers really do wear rights and capes and fight crime and so on."

But Marty Pasko wonders if anyone should even try to film a comic-book character. "I startle most of my colleagues in the comic book field when I say that the principal problem with most [film versions of comics] is that they attempt to do them at all . . . *Superman* was an almost successful attempt, in my mind. I'd give them an 'A' for effort. But there's no way you

PHOTO © 1982 COLUMBIA PICTURES

AND BEFORE MOM'S HORRIFIED EYES, MARION PLUNGES INTO THE WELL OF SOULS!
NOOOOOOO!
THE TORCHES AND THE OIL ARE HAVOC BURNED OUT
AND THE ANCIENT SECRETS...
ARE LOST!

ART © 1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

**Last year's most successful adaptation was *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, soon to be a regular Marvel comic.**

can put an adult in one of those skin-tight, brightly colored costumes and have him look like anything other than a buffoon. Chris Reeve came extremely close to pulling off the dignity necessary to make you forget for a moment how garishly garbed he was . . . but he didn't quite have it, and I doubt that any actor would. It's almost impossible because the suspension of disbelief necessary to accept a three-dimensional, flesh-and-blood figure in one of those costumes is almost impossible when all the surrounding elements are naturalistic to the degree that anything in film must be. Film is the most literal-minded dramatic medium there is."

Oddly enough, both O'Neil and Pasko prefer the late '60s stage musical, *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman,* to the films, though for different reasons. Pasko said it worked much better for him, "because I felt it was a medium that was eminently suited for that. The level of stylization made that larger-than-life quality work extremely well. I was not at all bothered by the idea that you could see Bob Holliday (the stage Superman) coming in on wires. The whole idea of the very balletic, graceful movement contributed to the choreography of the show . . . a quality which Chris Reeve was trying for in the film, incidently." The book of that show was written by two of the screen writers for the *Superman* films, David Newman and Robert Benton, and O'Neil likes the plot, because "it didn't hold Superman up to ridicule or contempt. It was not played as seriously as the comic books . . . but I could see the plot being done in comics without violating anything we chose not to violate."

The comics creators are also split on the subject of humor in a superhero film. The Melniker-Uslan *Batman* film is planned to be a serious effort, in contrast to the '60s TV series, and Brennert thinks the Darknight Detective is a good choice for a dramatic movie. "I think Batman's perhaps the one character it would work best with. But any story needs a *touch* of humor . . . It's possible to do a non-humorous film version of superheroes, but you've got to have characters who are rooted in the real world—characters like Batman or Daredevil who don't have powers, or who have powers close enough to feasible that the audience doesn't have to suspend its disbelief so much."

Denny O'Neil sees nothing wrong with humor in its place, but goes on to say, "I see something wrong with humor that ridicules the character . . . the camp thing. That's basically the one-line joke of all camp—that this stuff is stupid and silly and aren't we stupid and silly for watching it? That kind of humor, I think, only hurts. In a way, it insults your audience."

But Marty Pasko disagrees very strongly. "I've never understood it when a comic book editor says to me 'Do comedy relief if you must, but don't do camp.' What I've never understood is—what the hell does that *mean?* Comic books *are* camp and you emphasize that by their transposition into a naturalistic medium like film." Pasko also does not hold high hopes for a straight *Batman* film, saying a truly realistic treatment would probably look nothing like the comic-book version. "You can't have selective realism: you either have realism or you don't. You either have naturalism or you don't. . . . If you're depicting a totally naturalistic world, you can't take the extrapolation halfway. Using Batman as an example: if you're positing a man who decides to become a vigilante, take the law into his own hands, become this avenging force, and put on a costume to scare criminals, you have to take it to its logical conclusion—which is that no police commissioner in the world, who seriously expects to be re-appointed, is going to sit still for this going on in his city! His immediate conclusion is going to be: 'This man is a lunatic or worse.' He's a menace to society, and the commissioner will use every means at his disposal to put a stop to what this guy is doing. And I doubt that the general public would embrace this character—and I mean character in the derogatory, not the literary, sense, like 'the guy is a real character!'—as a hero.

"At that point, if you're developing your storyline logically, the plot degenerates into this elaborate chase for

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this madman in the funny suit. . . ."

Pasko explains why he thinks a serious superhero film would fail. "Accepting the character requires a willing suspension of disbelief which for me is extremely difficult to accomplish on film, without treating it half-seriously at best . . . The level of stylization is in the acting style, but the visual style has to match too for you to end up with an organic work. Which is why the *Batman* TV series worked on that level. It was all done on backlots. . . . Gotham City on the TV series looked artificial, and in that sense was comic-booky, and it worked with what they were trying to do."

The most recent attempts to adapt popular films to comic form have received generally bad notices, including a scathing review in *The Comics Journal* by Carter Scholz. Scholz's view is narrowed down to one sentence: "Why were these adaptations *(For Your Eyes Only, Dragonslayer, Raiders)* done at all?" For a look at the answer to that, let's start with what some of the creators of those books have to say about how the adaptations came about in the first place.

Denny O'Neil, who edited *FYEO* and wrote *Dragonslayer,* describes some of the process. "We get an incomplete screenplay . . . a draft, which is still being worked on while we've got it. And in the case of *FYEO,* we had exactly two weeks to put together 48 pages. With changes made at the last minute because they reshot the opening of the movie . . . so we had to scrap what we'd done and, as best we could, make it conform to the movie, even though we had no visuals . . . So the artist and writer (Howie Chaykin and Larry Hama) were flying blind about 50 percent of the time . . ."

Archie Goodwin explains his working style, which depends on the artist he's teamed with. "The first thing I look for is, while remaining true to comic book conventions, to adequately and enjoyably convey at least some of the experience of the movie. . . . The biggest problem is out of having to condense the material down. . . . First, I read the screenplay and try to get as much visual reference as I possibly can.

"Working on ALIEN was totally different from working on *Empire* or *Blade Runner,* because of the way the two artists work. With ALIEN, Walt Simonson and I more or less worked Marvel-style. We both went over the script and got together and figured how to pace the book and sort of talked out what we'd keep in and what we'd take out. But the actual page-by-page breakdowns on the thing were entirely Walt's. Then I went back through the script dialoguing.

"With *Empire* and *Blade Runner,* Al Williamson prefers working from a full script, so I took the stills and tried to work them into my own script, figuring how the visual references fit in."

So what do O'Neil and Goodwin find the most frustrating about doing film adaptations? The fact that they never get to see the film before they finish the books. Goodwin said, "If the adaptation is not done and ready when the film is first released, it isn't going to be commercially successful. Consequently, you're almost never in a position to have actually seen the film while you're working on it. That makes a big difference, because when you read a movie script, and even when you look at stills, it doesn't really convey to you how the film is paced, how the actors will read certain lines. . . ." Curiously, to date, O'Neil has still not seen *Dragonslayer.* He regrets that, and he regrets that the James Bond adaptation didn't come out as originally planned. "When it came up originally, it was going to be done by Frank Miller and myself . . . and we were delighted with the opportunity to take the story that they were going to tell on the screen and tell that story as a comic book. Then negotiations got bogged down . . . and when the necessary papers did get signed . . . both Miller and I were involved in other things by then. I think we were extremely lucky to get the calibre of professionals we got—two guys who didn't happen to be doing anything else for those two weeks. . . . It was a real catch-as-catch-can operation."

So where does the future of the relationship between comics and film stand? With a continuation of the *status quo*—film makers who don't understand the characters they purchased the rights to, and comics creators forced to adapt films under adversed conditions? Maybe not. Alan Brennert says the mood is changing in Hollywood. "There's a big rush on to comics and comics-style stuff. Everyone wants to do big visual stunts, and comics lend themselves to that. in part it's a reaction to the general anti-violence campaign . . . it's violent if the hero slugs somebody, but it's not as bad if the Hulk busts his way through a brick wall. It's exciting, but it won't add to the violence count.

"I think a lot of the writers working in Hollywood were avid are comics fans. They grew up with comics and it influences their writing."

And at the other end of the pipelines? Denny O'Neil says all comics writers and artists need is time: "I think we could do a hell of a comic book off of a movie, if we had time . . . time to re-conceptualize it, to figure out a way to re-tell the story is our medium, instead of just adapting some other medium." ■

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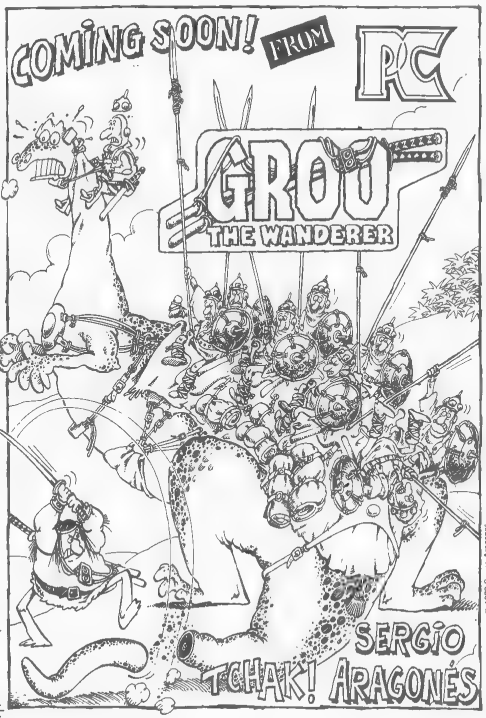


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# Where Have You Gone Herbie Popnecker?

By KEITH MALLOW

TCH, TCH, THESE CAVE PEOPLE SURE ARE UGLY!
TRUTH IS THAT I'M ACTUALLY POWERFUL MOTHER! UNLESS I STOP HIM, NOT ONLY HERBIE BUT HIS PERFORMERS!
I KEEP HIM AWAY FROM MY FRIENDS!
LOOK IN ON THEM
I GOT LOCKED IN ON FREAKS SHOW!
FAT FRIEND
OH, I'M NOT LIKE HIM.
OH, I'M NOT LIKE HIM, EITHER.
FOLKS LAUGH AT HIM BUT I LOVE HIM!
DON'T KNOW WHY THINGS ARE LIKE THAT!
SOMEBODY'S GOTTA LOVE HIM!
BAD BOY
HE HAS A HEART OF GOLD!
BUMP FROM BEHIND
LOOK, IT'S LIL' LAURA! I LOVE HER! HERBIE HAS A CRUSH ON HER! HOPE SHE'S NOT HURT!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M FINE!
I'M OKAY!
I'M OKAY!
I'M OKAY

**The cover of Herbie's first issue, right, and here he is dressed as the Fat Fury.**

and probably never will be, another comic like *Herbie.*"

Bob Rozakis, Production Manager and writer for DC Comics, had this to say about *Herbie:* "He was weird. If I were to pinpoint one thing to say about Herbie, that would be it. He was weird. He never made sense, but he didn't have to. He was Herbie."

Herbie had one weapon. Green Lantern has his Power Ring, Green Arrow his arrows, Wonder Woman her lasso, and Herbie had his lollipop—or should I say lollipops. Herbie had lollipops for every occasion. He had lollipops for time travel, space travel, flying, super powers—everything you can imagine! Of course, the one thing he used his lollipops for mainly, was for bopping. The biggest, most notorious villains could be laid low from a bop from Herbie's lollipop. Whether it be a monster or a super-villain, one bop would spell the end of trouble for Herbie.

Herbie was known throughout the world, as well as time. He was an honored guest of Presidents, Kings, Dictators, and always held in the highest esteem.

Wherever he journeyed he was hailed as a great hero. When he journeyed to the year 1776, George Washington was thrilled to see him. In 1492 Queen Isabela gave Christopher Columbus the money, just on Herbie's say so.

Movie stars idolized him. Ava Gardner asked him for his autograph. Gregory Peck asked Herbie to show him how to do a love scene. Of course Herbie complied. The actress swooned and fainted. Such was Herbie's animal magnetism.

He was loved by all women and feared by all criminals. Herbie had an uncanny knack for disguise. By simply putting on a hat, he became completely unrecognizable. At least he was unrecognizable to the people he was with. The reader never had a problem picking out the little fellow, who was as wide as he was tall.

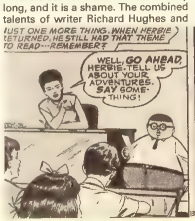
Herbie did have one problem, though. He was just a wee bit prejudiced. He didn't like fat people. He didn't like short people. He also didn't like people who wore glasses. I guess that when you are as handsome as Herbie was, you could afford to be a narcissist.

Herbie Popnecker was, perhaps, one of the world's first cult heroes. When it was popular to be a fan of superheroes, there were those diehard fans who thrived on his adventures. I knew I could never come from Krypton, and a bit from a radioactive spider would probably make me impotent, but I also knew that maybe, just maybe, I could find that secret stash of super lollipops. However, finding those lollipops was the easiest of the superhero alternatives, so I was satisfied with that.

*Herbie* comics were not with us very long, and it is a shame. The combined talents of writer Richard Hughes and artist Ogden Whitney gave us some of the best comic literature to date. *Herbie* comics were for the intelligent reader. If *Herbie* were published today, it's a safe bet that it would be a huge success, because the comic readers today are perhaps the most well read and informed bunch that have ever read a book. They would love the satire.

Herbie really never spoke in complete sentences. He just used as many words as he felt he had to. He enjoyed relaxing and lollipops as his two favorite hobbies. However, he always answered his country's call. Many times President Johnson or some other dignitary needed Herbie to bail him out of a jam, and Herbie came through with flying colors. Herbie, however, took it all very casually. He just did what he had to do.

I guess the only way to end an article on Herbie, is to let Herbie do it himself. In *Herbie* #5, in the story, "Sahib Herbie," Herbie's teacher asked him to write a theme on, "My Biggest Adventure." At the end of the 13-page story, Herbie returned to class and had to read his theme:


JUST ONE MORE THING. WHEN HERBIE RETURNED, HE STILL HAD THAT THEME TO READ---REMEMBER?
WELL, GO AHEAD HERBIE--TELL US ABOUT YOUR ADVENTURES. SAY SOME-THING!
WHAT'S TO SAY? I'M TOO FAT TO HAVE ADVENTURES!

# The Brave, the Bold and the Batman

## A Portrait of artist Jim Aparo

By JACK C. HARRIS

Just off the corner of a quiet suburban street in remarkably out-of-the-way Southington, Connecticut, lies a comfortable single story house surrounded by a low link-fence. When looking at it, one can hardly imagine that, for over 10 years, with clockwork regularity, the astonishing adventures of the world-famous masked detective, The Batman, have been illustrated in the dwelling's basement. And once this fact is accepted, it is equally amazing that names such as Neal Adams or Gene Colan come to most people's minds as perhaps being the owner of this home—since those two gentlemen are most often considered THE Batman artists of the recent past.

In reality, the Southington home and basement studio belong to a man who has helped shape The Batman's legend in a manner uniquely apart from the two previously mentioned artists. The man is Jim Aparo, the driving artistic force behind DC Comics' long-running Batman team-up publication, *The Brave and the Bold.*

Since the 98th issue of *The Brave and the Bold,* dated October/November, 1971, Jim Aparo has pencilled and inked 75 issues of that title, and inked an additional one. With that, and his inking and pencilling duties on DC's super-successful mini-series, *The Untold Legend of the Batman,* Aparo has achieved the distinction of having worked on more Batman adventures than any other artist in the past decade. Yet, perhaps a testimony to his determination and talent, Aparo only entered the comics industry in 1966 by landing an assignment at Charlton Comics.

"The first comics job I did," Aparo recalled recently, "was called 'Miss Bikini Luv.' It was a cartoon thing for the teenage title, *Go-Go Comics.* The Monkees and Sonny & Cher were popular back then . . . It was the '60s, 1966 . . ."

This initial assignment was the first in what was to become a long and happy career for Aparo, but it did not

**These eight covers are representative of Aparo's style. *The Phantom* is his earliest work and *Batman* the most recent.**

ALL CHARACTERS © 1982 DC COMICS INC

come about without seemingly endless years of struggle and submitting work to many different comics companies.

"I've always wanted to be a comics artist," Aparo confesses proudly, "but the schools around here weren't really geared towards that particular career. I received all my schooling in New Britain, a town about three or four miles from Southington. I was born and raised in New Britain. I took art in my school years because I wanted to be a comic *strip* artist—not comic *book* artist because strips were the thing in those days. And naturally, like everyone else, my ideals, as Li'l Abner might say, were Flash Gordon, Terry and the Pirates, the stuff I grew up on!"

Aparo loved the comic strips and admits that he would rather stay home and copy and draw from his favorites than go out and play baseball. "I did play baseball and all with my friends, but when it was raining or during the winter months when it was too cold to go out, I was drawing all the time. I was a comic book fan too! I read them all: *Captain Marvel, Superman.* I collected them. I've still got a whole gang of books downstairs now in my studio. *Captain Marvel Jr.* by Mac Raboy was my favorite. In fact, someone recently put out a reprint book of his stuff in black and white. I got hold of that because he was one of my favorites, a lot of nice looking jobs in there, but the reproduction was bad because the colors were in grays and whatnot. It spoiled it, but it's all there, you can still see his talent!

"After I finished high school I studied anatomy at the Hartford Art School which is now the University of Hartford."

For the next decade Jim Aparo's artistic talents were applied toward advertising work for a small four-man art agency called the William Schaller Company in Connecticut. The year was 1957 and, while not busy with layouts, paste-ups and artwork for the agency, Aparo was submitting drawings to the comics companies.

"I got rejected by everybody," he says, now that he can laugh about it. "I went down to E.C. when I was about 21 or so, but it was a closed shop. I grew up with E.C. and those books were unreal, still way ahead of their time even today. But like most of the comics houses, they were not open to unknowns. You had to be an exceptional talent to get in.

"I got rejected by DC too. And I remember reading a Ray Bradbury story (I'm fascinated by science fiction) and I did this story up as a sample for *Creepy*, the Warren magazine. I did it in their style, with wash and all, but Archie Goodwin, the editor at the time, turned me down. Today he still recalls the incident.

"I imagine that most artists have been turned down in their lives, but it's a blow. You have to keep going with it, though. If you want it bad, you've got to chase it. A lot of rejections came about, but I just kept submitting. Then, gradually, I guess the doors started opening up.

"I had called Dick Giordano at Charlton Comics. He was the editor back then, but I didn't know who he was. I'd set up an appointment with him. I was on vacation from the agency at the time, it was summer. I went down there with my samples during the last week of my time off. Dick thought I had potential. I came home with this 'Miss Bikini Luv' script. I was now working parttime for the comics!

"I was really involved with the agency, but I wanted comics; I could taste it! So, gradually, I'd try my hand at different things to see what I could do. I did some romance stories. They were kind of corny at times, but they were different. They gave me the chance to draw cars and various everyday things. I did a lot of ghost stories for *Ghostly Tales* and *The Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves.* And finally, the superhero stuff came along. The first superhero strip I did was a series called Nightshade for the back of *Captain Atom* which Steve Ditko was doing. Nightshade was written by Dave Kaler."

Aparo's first published comics work.

But with the fourth or fifth segment of Nightshade on his drawing board, Charlton killed their superhero line. "Then there was this writer who came up," recalls Aparo, "with a weird name: Sergius O'Shaugnessy. He comes up with character called Wander and Dick gave *me* the script. Now I thought this was something that had already been established. It was a *science fiction western.* But Dick tells me no, and that I was to come up with the 'look' of everything. There was no story conference, *nothing!* That's the kind of guy Giordano is . . . he's something else. He figures if you're professional, he'll give you a script and you'll *do* it! If you have a problem, call, straighten it out, but you're on your own, which was neat! And it was neat. I was my own boss, which I still am in a sense. So I did this thing and came up with Wander . . ."

Wander debuted in *Cheyenne Kid* #66, May, 1968. And it was actually written by Denny O'Neil under the "weird" O'Shaugnessy pen name. O'Neil was another soon-to-be-major comic book talent who, along with Aparo, Editor Giordano was about to take with him on a monumental move.

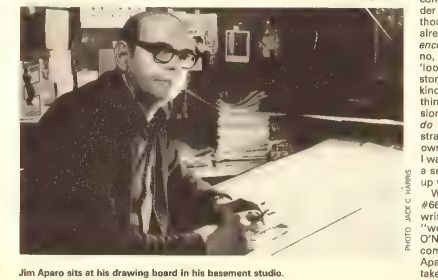


PHOTO: JACK C. HARRIS
Jim Aparo sits at his drawing board in his basement studio.

"I got off Wander," remembers Aparo, "because Charlton had just contracted to do the Kings Feature stuff: *Phantom, Flash Gordon* . . . I wanted *Flash Gordon*, but I never spoke up and said I did. Pat Boyette got *Flash* and I got *The Phantom*.

"It was then that Dick told me that he was moving on to greener pastures by going down to DC to be an editor there. He said it was up to me if I wanted to come along. I told him I would, but that I would like to continue doing *The Phantom* at Charlton. He said something could be worked out.

"He went down to New York and DC and brought along myself, writers Steve Skeates and Denny O'Neil and artists Pat Boyette and Steve Ditko (who went on to create *The Creeper*). I asked Dick what I was going to be doing for DC and he asked me if I'd ever heard of Aquaman."

1968 had seen the advent of Aquaman as part of a Saturday morning cartoon blitz. While leaving something to be desired in the field of artistic animation, the Aquaman cartoons had elevated the character's status and he had become a highly popular DC title. "I was never involved with Aquaman," Aparo confesses, "so with the comics shops starting to spring up around then, I went out trying to find old *Aquaman* issues and get myself familiarized. I had some *Justice League* issues where artist Mike Sekowsky was drawing Aquaman with Wonder Woman and all the others. I was using Mike's concept of Aquaman. Then I got my hands on the Nick Cardy stuff. It was, well . . . *loose*, but when the word came down that I was going to be on the *Aquaman* feature, about two or three issues before I got my first one published, he opened up. He's a great talent, he really is. He did a fantastic art job on those three issues before mine. When I saw those books, I was sick. Unbelievable. If you looked at the earlier stuff you could see the style was there, but he didn't spend the time on it like those last three books he did.

"I was thinking, I'll *never* compete with this guy! I tried to emulate him all the way because I felt the character was set in his way; he'd been doing it for so many years! I'd emulate him, at least for a while to keep the fans. They were furious because changes were being made. That's when fans were really going at it.

So they panned the hell out of me. But it settled down and I started coming up with my own style until I was accepted as THE *Aquaman* artist. It took time, it's true of any change.

"After *Aquaman* was *The Phantom Stranger*. Carmine Infantino was DC's Editorial Director then and wanted more work from me. This is what Dick told me. At the time I was still doing *The Phantom* for Charlton. They were both bi-monthly books, *Aquaman* and *The Phantom*, so it worked out beautifully, they were staggered perfectly. But I finished what I was doing on *The Phantom* because I did not want to cut and run from Charlton and leave them high and dry. So I finished up and switched to DC."

*The Phantom Stranger* had been a short-lived mystery hero, appearing in the early '50s. DC's tryout comic, *Showcase*, reintroduced the character to new audiences in the 79th issue of that title as a reprint story with a new art frame device by Jerry Grandenetti and, later, Bill Draut. *Phantom Stranger* began his own new title the same way until the reprint material ran out. With the fourth issue of the new run, new art was commissioned. Neal Adams drew the first all-new *Phantom Stranger* issue and set the style that Aparo would take to greater heights with the seventh issue, his first.

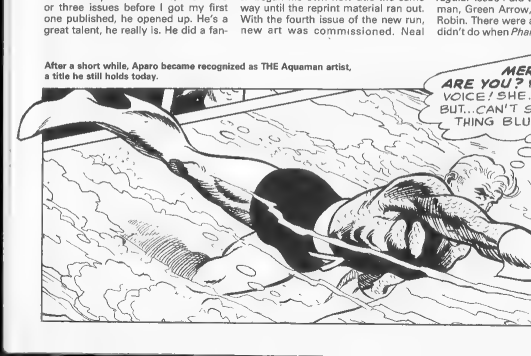
"Carmine (Infantino) drew the old *Phantom Stranger* issues," Aparo reflects, recalling his thoughts as he took over the feature, "with just a black trench coat and hat. Adams gave him the caps and the turtleneck sweater with the medallion around his neck. At first, I just drew a circle for the medallion, but Joe Orlando, the editor back then, said it needed something in the middle. I asked him what, and he said, 'Anything!' I said I had to keep it simple or I'd go crazy drawing the thing. I drew a circle and a couple of squiggles. It didn't represent anything, but it looked occult!"

*The Phantom Stranger* assignment was directly responsible for Aparo's greatest and best-known comics achievement: *The Brave and the Bold*. Editor Murray Boltinoff had assigned writer Bob Haney to a *Batman/Phantom Stranger* crossover for the 98th issue. And, he theorized, what better artist to handle the visuals than the Phantom Stranger's regular artist—Jim Aparo?

"That was my first crack at The Batman," says Aparo, "and I was so nervous about it that I did the splash page twice because I just wasn't happy with it th first time. I was just doing *Phantom Stranger* at the time because *Aquaman* had been cancelled. I'll *never* understand *that!* I don't know *what* happened.

"*Brave and the Bold* became my regular assignment when *The Phantom Stranger* was killed off. The first *regular* issue I did was #100 with Batman, Green Arrow, Black Canary and Robin. There were a couple of issues I didn't do when *Phantom Stranger* was

**After a short while, Aparo became recognized as THE Aquaman artist, a title he still holds today.**



on the slide . . . and then came . . . The Spectre!"

Editor Joe Orlando had been impressed after reading the ghostly character's origin in DC's reprint *Secret Origins* title and he assigned writer Michael Fleisher to a new series of stories. Fleisher took some heavy fan flack for the violent tone of his Spectre scripts. At the time, even the art of illustrator Aparo was taken to task by fans.

"Mike's an excellent writer, and I enjoyed drawing The Spectre. I'd get on the horn to him and ask him *where* he came up with those ideas, and he'd say he just thought about them and they came to him. 'You're weird,' I'd tell him, then I'd draw it. In fact, I'd tone down the art. I don't think the art was that violent and I don't think Mike's writing was that violent. It was just that Spectre was that type of character. I don't know why everyone got in such a huff about this thing. There was a lot more violence in the world than there was in that comic book! Viet Nam was on the news back then—you turned on the 6 O'Clock News and that was all you saw—people being blown to bits.

"Not that Mike was a gory writer, but he did write a few things that I believed the Comics Code Authority wouldn't let get through. I toned it down. For instance, when Spectre enlarged a part of artist dividers to stick a couple of guys, I drew it in such a way so that you knew what was happening, but it was off to one side, off panel.

"Another scene was where Spectre made an enlarged pair of scissors to go after a guy. I showed him fighting them off around his waist, and then showed only the handles as you read the sound effect (CHUNK) of them cutting the guy in half. Would you call that violent? Maybe you would, but I've seen movies like *Dirty Harry*, where one guy blows another away with a Magnum. And kids go to these movies and think nothing about it. So if Mike took a lot of flack, I feel sorry for him, because I think he did a great job!"

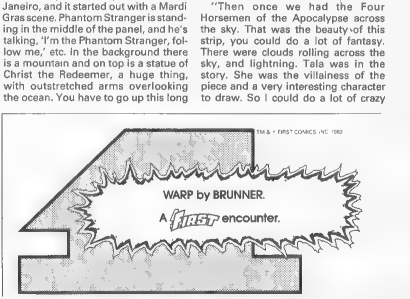
The Aparo technique for working has been a successful formula for all 16 of his comic book years. During his first issue of *Aquaman* for DC, he was required to show his pencilled work before inking and turning in the completed job. Someone else lettered that initial *Aquaman* issue. But after that, he was allowed to finish assignments totally before handing it in to his respective editors. And Aparo is a triple threat artist, not only doing all his own pencilling and inking, but *lettering* the pages as well. And it's done at a steady page-a-day pace.

"When I read a script, I start seeing pictures right away," he reveals. "I don't do any layouts. The first reading I do is to see what reference materials I'll need. There was a great deal of that in *The Phantom Stranger*. That was an education in itself. Writer Len Wein took that character all over the world! I remember once, I went crazy. There was a story that took place in Rio de Janeiro, and it started out with a Mardi Gras scene. Phantom Stranger is standing in the middle of the panel, and he's talking, 'I'm the Phantom Stranger, follow me,' etc. In the background there is a mountain and on top is a statue of Christ the Redeemer, a huge thing, with outstretched arms overlooking the ocean. You have to go up this long staircase to get to it. I went *crazy* trying to find a picture of that statue! I looked through my set of Encyclopedia Britannica, and I went to the library. All I find is a *little* picture of it. I stumbled upon it; a front view of it. I got it under a magnifying glass and I had to surmise what it would look like sideways and from the back. It worked out.

"Then once we had the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse across the sky. That was the beauty of this strip, you could do a lot of fantasy. There were clouds rolling across the sky, and lightning. Tala was in the story. She was the villainess of the piece and a very interesting character to draw. So I could do a lot of crazy

BLAM BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
IF HE IS AN ENEMY SPY! E-EXECUTE HIM! SWIFTLY!
IF HE'S EL TRAITOR! B-BUT HE D-DON'T EXECUTE SO EASY! TH THE GUNS'RE GOIN' RIGHT THROUGH HIM!
HE'S NOT POSSIBLE!
ALL THINGS ARE... POSSIBLE...!
O-OH MY GOD! L-LOOK!!
IN THE SPECTRAL NETHERWORLD WHERE I MUST DWELL...
ART © 1982 DC COMICS INC.

**Aparo had to adapt Fleisher's script to avoid Comics Code objections to the violence.**



things like zapping people and whatnot. But the Phantom Stranger himself, he went everywhere. There were scenes from London, there was one in Israel, they went to Egypt. There were a lot of little scenes and you have to find this material. You've seen these things, but you can't remember how to draw them. It's a job, but it's enjoyable. I enjoy doing it.

"I was younger too. I'm almost 50 now. I was full of beans. I put a lot of stuff in. I had a lot of energy in those days. Some of the guys today, like George Perez, he's a fantastic artist! But there's so much stuff in those panels! Personally, I believe it's overworked. I would like to keep it as simple as I can. Like Gene Colan. He's a great artist, simplicity in its purest form. If he needs a chair, he'll draw a chair, but he doesn't go crazy. Perez, he puts in every leaf on every tree. It's nice to do, but I wouldn't want to ink it! He's great, he's a fantastic artist, but he's a young fellow . . ."

Aparo continues discussing his approach to comics by adding, "On my second reading of a script I see a picture in my mind's eye. It may change when I sit down, but it's there. It's gotten to a point now, after all the years I've been doing it (and it may be a strange way to work), that I do my lettering first. I place it in the panels out of the way because I know what I'm going to be drawing, roughly. And if I do have any problems, I'll draw over it, white the letters out and re-letter it. And it's been working well. I guess it must be a sense of design I must have, not to be boastful, but it's in me. I may vary from the original idea, but it's still basically there.

"I used to pencil the lettering in first, but now I just ink it in. Then I'll pencil. I'll do three panels, ink them and then pencil three more just to break up the page. Or maybe I'll pencil the whole page, whatever I feel like doing! I started with a blank piece of paper and there it is! One page a day. I can pencil two a day if that's all I'm doing, but if it's inking and lettering, it's one a day.

"I pencil pretty tight, even for myself. I won't fill in all the heads and shading because I know what's going to be there, but wrinkles in clothes, etc., it's all there. I work with a 6H pencil. It's a hard lead, but I like it because it doesn't smear. If it has a tendency to smear I put a piece of paper under my hand. I'll start drawing very lightly and then I'll get heavier automatically and soon I'll be digging into the paper and erasing and erasing! But it's been working out pretty well. I've been doing it since '67!"

Aparo's work is well respected by both his professional peers and his fans. His command of the page, his sense of design and placement of black across his fantasy worlds of comic book adventures have gained him legions of admirers. He has no regrets, except for the fact that it took him so long to enter the field he loves so well.

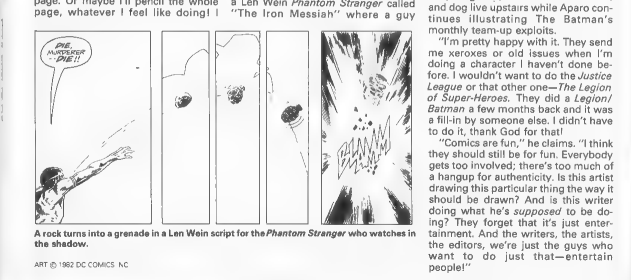
"I wish I had the talent that the younger artists have today when I was their age. I believe most of these guys are in their 20s. These men are really good, they're excellent artists. I don't put any artist down, because they sit down at a blank piece of paper every day, pull out a script and create! I'm amazed at the writers today. That's another aspect of the business . . . how they keep coming up with those ideas. I would love to do some writing. Both sides of it are challenges . . . the artist has his, the writer has his. A lot of artists like to work from breakdowns . . . like at Marvel, but that's where you go bananas with panels. I prefer to work from a script. I don't mind a few extra panels when you really need it. I remember a panel from a Len Wein *Phantom Stranger* called "The Iron Messiah" where a guy picked up a rock and threw it. As it progressed through these little sliver panels, it changed into a hand grenade and it blew up when it arrived. If it calls for something like that, I'll do it—but when they break up a whole story into little sliver panels—? Can they do it at a page-a-day?"

Many of his fans wonder why they rarely see Aparo in attendance at New York comic conventions. In fact, many of the people in the DC offices have never even *met* Aparo. He explains his seeming reclusiveness easily: "It's a hassle to get to New York. Southington is not on any regular bus or train lines. I like to meet fans, but I feel sort of gun shy too. When I did come to the 1980 Comic Art Convention these kids came up to me and would say, 'Wow-whee, Jim Aparo!' I'd get a kick out of it, but another kid would say, 'Come on, take it easy, calm down.' This first kid was flipping out. It sort of embarrassed me in a sense. I don't feel like a guy who should be put on a pedestal and be sort of worshipped. It's a strange feeling, sort of spooky. I'm just a cog in a huge thing. I'm pretty happy with it. I sign a yearly contract with DC. I could sign for longer, but I do it for a reason . . . I would still like to do a syndicated strip. The chance might not come. I'm not interested in doing anything for the independent publishers, but I may take a crack at something with DC's new incentive program for creating new projects. I'd like to try something like that . . ."

So Jim Aparo works at his regimented page-a-day pace in his walled-off basement cubicle that's piled high with old comics and magazines, decorated with model plans he's constructed for reference and posters by other artists he admires. His wife, son, daughter (another one is married) and dog live upstairs while Aparo continues illustrating The Batman's monthly team-up exploits.

"I'm pretty happy with it. They send me xeroxes or old issues when I'm doing a character I haven't done before. I wouldn't want to do the *Justice League* or that other one—*The Legion of Super-Heroes*. They did a *Legion/Batman* a few months back and it was a fill-in by someone else. I didn't have to do it, thank God for that!

"Comics are fun," he claims. "I think they should still be for fun. Everybody gets too involved; there's too much of a hangup for authenticity. Is this artist drawing this particular thing the way it should be drawn? And is this writer doing what he's *supposed* to be doing? They forget that it's just entertainment. And the writers, the artists, the editors, we're just the guys who want to do just that—entertain people!"




**A rock turns into a grenade in a Len Wein script for the *Phantom Stranger* who watches in the shadow.**

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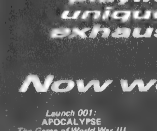


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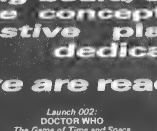


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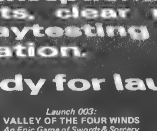

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# Creating the Comics
## Part Four A: Inking
### Starring
## Klaus Janson • Bob Layton • Tom Palmer
## Joe Rubinstein
**Hosted By Robert Greenberger**

*Editor's Note: Back in early February, Joe Rubinstein asked when I was going to do something about inkers. I told him that we'd get to it in the natural course of Creating the Comics, an answer which seemed to please him. He followed that up by proposing an inker's roundtable, gathering three or four inkers to sit and discuss their craft. When I watched Rubinstein, Bob Layton and Bob Wiacek do a similar thing at a Creation Convention, I was convinced that it would be a good idea. So on April 30, editorial assistant Eddie Berganza and I went to Marvel's neat new offices and met with Rubinstein, Layton Klaus Janson and Tom Palmer.*

*Denys Cowan asked to sit in and listen and being in a glass enclosed room, we were subjected to many curious glances, stares and funny faces from president Jim Galton on down to* Crazy *managing editor Jim Owsley. Jack Abel joined us briefly and Palmer had to leave after the first hour or so. In total, the conversation ran some two and a half hours and we now present the edited transcript, read and approved by our participants.*

*Before we begin with the introductions, I want to thank Jim Shooter, Frankie Sinkiewicz and Eva Freberge for all their help during the interview. BOB LAYTON has been working in comics for about seven years. He began at Charlton as an inker and then moved over to DC and finally Marvel. Until he recently, he was best known as co-plotter and inker on* Iron Man *for four years, bringing the title to new heights of popularity. Layton is also the one man team on the* Hercules *limited series and has totally redesigned the look of* Power Man/Iron Fist *as its new writer/inker, along with Denys Cowan, penciller.*

*JOE RUBINSTEIN: Since he was 17, Rubinstein has been professionally inking comics, making for a career of six and a half years. His greatest claim to fame was an 11 issue run on* X-Men, *the longest he's been on any one book. He is currently counting his royalty money from the* Wolverine *limited series he has inked.*

*TOM PALMER: After working with former EC artist Jack Kamen, Palmer went out on his own to build up a reputation in both the advertising and comics worlds. When he hasn't been doing ads, Palmer has inked some of the greatest names in the business, including a long run on* The Avengers *and a record setting run on inking Gene Colan's pencils for* Tomb of Dracula. *He now embellishes Walt Simonson's layouts on* Star Wars.

*KLAUS JANSON: A long time comics fan, Janson has been in the business about 10 years and is most noted for his long stretch as inker/embellisher on* Daredevil. *Janson has also done work over numerous pencillers for both Marvel and DC.*

**Mike Zeck pencilled this version of the Hulk for a Marvel promotion. Jim Shooter had stats made and all four inkers took them home to work on. The results are presented on right. And we promise, next issue we'll show you what our inkers look like.**

**COMICS SCENE:** What led you to inking instead of pencilling or being a penciller/inker?

**PALMER:** I found that I could make more money and have less hassle, I could produce the work and be satisfied with what I was doing because I had control. I pencilled something early on and I wouldn't have inked it the way it ended up. I think at one point, you're at the low end of the stick, inking. But you find out you're the major influence on the artwork.

**LAYTON:** With inking you're always like the last man on the spot. How many times have you heard, 'Well, those pencils were really great and the inker brought it down' or if you did a great job, "you elevate the penciller a lot of times." For the longest time the buying public wasn't aware of what we did.

**RUBINSTEIN:** The inker, I think, is the anchor of a job because if the script says the character is smiling, and the penciller didn't do it, he changes it. Once he finishes inking a night time scene and he checks over the coloring and it's a daytime scene he once again makes sure that it's right.

**PALMER:** I was going to say about working with Wally Wood, it wasn't long—a month or so—but I pencilled something for him and someone else did, like five or six people did, Gil Kane was working on somethingthere, and when Woody was through, you didn't know who had done what.

BOB LAYTON

KLAUS JANSON

TOM PALMER

JOE RUBINSTEIN

HULK © 1985 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

**LAYTON:** Yeah, exactly. I remember Woody would pull stuff out of his files and say 'I want you to finish this off here and here.' We used really horrible pencil swipes and Woody would just go in and oomph, make this stuff original. It was all Woody regardless of whether the figure was done by somebody and this other thing was done by somebody else. It was really amazing.

**JANSON:** Actually, because my pencils were so bad, inking was just a very practical decision. But the reason I've stayed with it for so long is that element of control that Tom mentioned. The ink line is the line that's reproduced, not the pencilled line. It's that element of control, the freedom of interpretation. It's hard to explain. I like working with blacks, I like creating a three dimensional effect which I can't doin pencils. I can't really communicate in pencil like how I communicate in ink.

**RUBINSTEIN:** I started practicing 10 years ago because Gil Kane said in an interview in *Alter Ego* 'I should have really been an inker first so I could learn the business,' That made sense, and I started to ink. Inking is thought but I don't think it's as tough as pencilling. I love the concept of two people being greater than their parts—Simon and Garfunkle are two very good musicians apart but together there's sort of the magic there.

**CS:** What about the tools in the trade? What does an inker use?

**RUBINSTEIN:** His foot if it's necessary. I use a 103 Hunts Mapping Point which is the most flexible one I can find. A 3 Series 7 finepoint brush which I think most people use. A copperpoint fountain pen for deadweight outlines like Storm's tiara. A 350 Esterbrook for stiffer outlining.

**LAYTON:** No wonder you're so slow.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Yeah, right. Dick Giordano says the reason he uses a brush is so he can work as quickly as possible rather than switch tools all the time. He says he never dips his brush and rolls it to a point so that he can do it as he's inking, do a bold passage and get a point.

**CS:** What do you guys use?

**LAYTON:** I use a 102 Crowquill point, the old Jack Able point, and a 102 brush. There's something Woody always told me, 'He said you know all those nice sets of Rapidographs with the numbers and all that kind of stuff. Throw it out the window.' He gives me a 59¢ Pentel and he says, 'You're going to do anything with points and stuff, you can ink over this, it's waterproof, you get the same kind of line, you can even flex it a little bit, I never used anything but that if I have to use templates and I've never had any reproduction problems with it. I tried a Rapidograph once and I ended up using it for a cigarette holder or something.

**RUBINSTEIN:** There was a legend that Tom Palmer used a special kind of pen and I've never gotten a straight answer. I heard you bought up every gross of this specibl pen point in the tri-state area.

**PALMER:** I've been selling them secretly to Klaus.

**RUBINSTEIN:** So what do you use? What's the number?

**PALMER:** A secret pen. I bought all the available grosses up in the tri-state area. Really, I have all different points. I try anything. I used my fingers, a brush, I change brushes. I noticed you get a different look depending upon the number brush you use. A Winsor & Newton number three gives you a look like Woody, Frank Springer, or Milton Caniff if you wanted to. A Winsor & Newton number two gives you a slicker look.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Lou Fine used to use a Japanese water color brush.

**JANSON:** The brush that I have been using lately has been an oil painters' brush, a very hard brush. It's wonderful, wonderful. It looks a lot like the Italian and European stuff.

**LAYTON:** I did an *Iron Man* with one of these Japanese fountain brushes and I loved it.

**PALMER:** There's a Rigger brush that's used for lettering, I learned on it in a studio where I worked, it's great to ink folds in clothing, sometimes!

**RUBINSTEIN:** How's that different?

**PALMER:** It's flat. You can do lettering on comps, artwork, using different widths.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Like an oil brush?

**PALMER:** No, it's sable. If you went to an art store and asked for a Rigger brush, they would know what it is.

**JANSON:** The advantage with the oil brush is that they are about seven dollars cheaper. They cost about two dollars. I love them. i can get very flat textures, really good.

**PALMER:** Jack Kamen used to sit there in the studio and knock out illustrations like you wouldn't believe. He never washed out the brushes for inking, and after two weeks-he put them in the back of his roto-tray, and I'd say, 'What are they?' He would answer, 'These are my special effects brushes.' I realized later that when you used them for trees, or other effects, you would get these weird squiggley lines. There's a guy advertising all his old brushes for sale as special effects brushes.

**RUBINSTEIN:** There's a guy named Maurice Whitman (who did the Tales of the Amazons in *Wonder Woman* in the summer of 1977) who dips his brush just enough so that between the wood and the tip there's this enormous bowl of ink, that just lives there and it's very odd.

**CS:** Where do you guys do your best work?

**RUBINSTEIN:** Alone, at home.

**LAYTON:** Sky diving.

**RUBINSTEIN:** I saw Dick Giordano work with a lap board, this board that just rested on his belly. So I got a piece of wood from my father's woodshed and for 10 years I've been using this and it looks like hell and it splinters me all the time. I wouldn't know how to ink without it because my arms fit in the grooves.

**LAYTON:** Klaus and I can't do that because we have bellies.

**JANSON:** I've been using the same drawing board that I got in the mail from Art Instruction School before they went out of business. And the table that I draw at is the top of an old dresser. I think I'm very superstitious about it.

**LAYTON:** I had a board like that but it's upstate now. I got it from Dan Adkins, from his old studio in East Liverpool. You know, Craig Russell had used it, Paul Gulacy and then, Val Mayerik and it has got like 8000 coats of paint on it. It's all rickety and it's someplace like in the attic and I now use a regular tilt drawing board. I can ink anywhere, though.

**JANSON:** Do you bring the drawing board to yourself or do you lean over the drawing board?

**LAYTON:** A little bit of both. I shift back and forth sometimes. When I'm getting down there and doing all that hardware stuff I usually go down but if I'm just inking I can lay back and have a good time with it.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Dick used to say that inking was a physical chore for him because of the posture he had to maintain while inking—he always had to sit up and keep his arms distent and all that stuff. I never used to understand that but I've also got a bad back from leaning into my board.

**PALMER:** I do some large illustrations that are involved with air brushing and all so I have a hugh board like 30x40, pneumatic, so the pages get lost there. I tend to flatten it out because if you tend to ink too vertically, the ink doesn't flow. I evolved into a studio in my home and with children around, noise doesn't bother me. My small son, who is constantly asking me questions about *Star Wars*, keeps me from making mistakes. You'd be surprised at the mistakes he's found. He's a good critic.

**LAYTON:** How old is he?

**PALMER:** He's seven. You know, the Millennium Falcon has to have gun ports on the bottom . . . unbelieveable.

**LAYTON:** I have a girl who's six and she knows all this stuff already.

**PALMER:** I think that's why I enjoy it.

Other than that, they don't relate to the other work you're doing.

**RUBINSTEIN**: Somebody says John Buscema stands and they als said Ernest Hemingway used to write standing up at a speaker's podium.

**CS:** He was always strange.

**RUBINSTEIN**: Yes. Old Ernie. Ric Estrada is a mormon today, he can't have alcohol or stimulants but his first drink was bought for him when he was 16 years old, by Ernest Hemingway, in Cuba. It's like losing your virginity to Xaveria Hollander.

**CS:** Can you explain the difference between an inker and an embellisher?

**RUBINSTEIN**: What about what is an inker, first?

**PALMER:** A guy with dirty fingers.

**RUBINSTEIN**: Inkers were created for the assembly line process. There's not enought time to get artist A to do it so we give it to artist B to ink. And while we're at it, we'll get a guy to do secondary figures and backgrounds. The only reason things are inked is to make them photographable, but then you start deciding: is it an inker's job to try and make the penciller's lines darker or is he an artist, too.

Those credits which Marvel used to have: 'Artist/inker. I really resented them. That means you can get anyone off the street and cover your lines.

**LAYTON:** I went into a campaign against that when I came over to Marvel, from DC. One of the books I did had Artist/inker on it and the penciller was saying, 'Hey, I don't understand. What's the problem? I told him, 'Fine. Next time we work together it can say so-and-so-penciller/Bob Layton artist.' He said, 'Wow! Wait a minute! It's not fair to me. I like artist, both names in plural.

**PALMER:** I have to go back to what Joe was saying, because I'm shaking my head. I don't quite ... it's been told to me that certain people can pencil and plot, like John Buscema, if you've ever seen his pencils. They're like shorthand, but everything is there. You don't want somebody like that to pencil and ink. If he pencils, he can turn out so much work. Then you have people who are adept at inking, they're so valuable at that point, you don't want them to do penciling. I think it's gotten to that point today, where, Dick Giordano said recently, we, and I mean all of us, are at a premium. You've had enough experience doing what we're doing, just look at the books, the bouncing back and forth between companies. It's true, when we first started out, the pencillers had this distinction, you walked around saying, "I'd love to ink this guy, I'd love to ink that guy', hoping something would rub off. I just think, the industry, the way it is now, the inkers have finally acquired a name.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Jim Shooter tells me that when you have Terry Austin's name on a book, it sells 20,000 more, because he's become a name.

**CS:** Wouldn't that be the same with Tom, for example?

**RUBINSTEIN:** Tom's a great inker, I think it's been proven that quality isn't the only thing that sells. Gene Colan and Tom Palmer were doing tremendous work on *Dracula* for years and *Howard the Duck* came up and readers said, 'Hey, they're pretty good, I wonder where they came from.' Frank Thorne was a wonderful artist on *Tomahawk* and then *Red Sonja* came around.

So I think it's a tremendous amount of factors. Klaus won the Eagle Awards [England's comic fan awards] this year for best inker, because *Daredevil* became a book that people noticed. Klaus has been doing just as good a job all the way along. You get all the attention.

**CS:** What goes into the finishes?

**PALMER:** Working with John Buscema brings out more of the inker because you're working from the bottom up. If you pencil somebody—I remember seeing Jack Kirby's pencils when I first came up and I couldn't believe it. It was a gray printed page, they were so beautiful. I don't see how you can go wrong, you were afraid to deviate from his lines. So I think that somebody like John Buscema, he's the only one who pencils loose like that. Is envied by many people.

**LAYTON:** I have not done a tight pencilled job. I stay away from them. It's idiot work for the most part. It's so much trouble to change anything, it doesn't give you any room to fluctuate as an artist. It's boring.

**JANSON:** I think what's happened lately in the past couple of years; tight pencils have been used by up and coming people at a training ground. It's the people who have been around for a couple of years who have been doing breakdowns, like Buscema's or Walt Simonson's stuff.

**LAYTON:** It's going to make you work too. Once you've got the basics down, you're going to have to reach for things you don't know how to do.

**PALMER:** That's the point. We all have an ego. And Joe keeps saying he is an artist not an inker. At one time the person who pencilled the book got most of the credit. It was always this way. And only now, you mentioned Terry Austin, who can help make a book sell, or Klaus getting the award, it has changed. We have egos and it's good that everyone's becoming their own person. You can ink the way you are today, not an absolute copy of the penciller.

**RUBINSTEIN:** I want to take exception to something Bob said earlier. When you get someone like Alan Weiss who draws so beautifully, and so delicately, so much of what he is doing is the rendering, well, you really have to know an awful lot to keep it there. You see, if an inker is given a bad pencilled job and inks it and brings up the level—he's done a good job. If you're given a Buscema pencilled job and it doesn't look like Buscema when you're through, or Alan Weiss who's so incredibly delicate about what he does, the lighting, the anatomy, the composition, but when you have someone like Klaus, like Palmer, like Bob, who puts all ink on layouts and make it look perfectly fine, then you have to start balancing it. Is it more valuable to have Klaus do Frank Miller's layouts, and Frank Miller is not a renderer, he's a composer, as is Walt Simonson, but Alan Weiss is a shining example of someone who renders very delicately and you have to know an awful lot about what you're doing to keep up with his rendering. The idiot work expression is what bothered me.

**LAYTON:** There are exceptions. About Jack Kirby, or a John Byrne, somebody who puts just everything in there. To ink that stuff is just really boring.

**RUBINSTEIN:** There's an art to the amount of pencilling too. Jim Starlin used to take a sock and rub it so it looked like there was more done in for the editors. It was a gray stain. Some people like Paul Gulacy used to painfully render everything. Then there's people like Mike Grell and John Byrne who do very precise, definite pencils but leave you leeway. You know what they want no matter how wrong the drapery or anatomy is. They're not tyrannical like Neal Adams, his pencils are very definitive. Why does Tom Palmer's inking over Neal Adams look so different from Dick Giordano's? They're all basically following the same lines but there is that amount of interpretation. A penciller has to gauge how much he is putting in.

I think of an inker as an actor. He's taking someone else's lines and he's saying the same lines and he's making them personal in his interpreting.

**JANSON:** I don't think we've defined an inker who does tight pencils and an inker who inks breakdowns. What is the difference? I don't think the public knows. To me, the biggest difference is black. No blacks or shadows are indicated in breakdowns. It's up to the finisher to tell the story and design the blacks within the page.

**RUBINSTEIN:** If Jim Starlin, x's a few areas, [indicating black area] do you feel obligated to carry through with that or if they're layouts, you can do as you want.

*(Continued on page 65)*

# The Gene Colan Interview

## Hopalong Cassidy to Batman

By DON McGREGOR

*"I never saved any of the comic books I did artwork for. I never knew the industry would take off the way it did, because people in those days who were caught reading a comic book should be ashamed of themselves. That was the way it was viewed. But I wanted to be the very best I could be at it."*

*—Gene Colan*

In the early 1950s, the McCarthy witchhunts had just begun, a sweeping, fanatical indictment that would affect all entertainment media and all who worked in them. Films, books, television and even comics came under the gun.

The creators of the comics field did not foresee the advent of the witchhunters, nor even that there would be a time when they would be forced to implement a self-imposed comics code, a board of censorship that deemed what could be in comics and what could not.

Gene Colan decided to look for freelance comic work during those early '50s. He had been working on staff at Timely Comics, and while he enjoyed the camaraderie of his co-workers, especially artist Syd Shores, the 9 to 5 aspect of such a job gave him the impetus to seek outside work. Fortunately, he was successful in obtaining work from other companies.

Ironically, he had sought freelance work without any sense of prophecy that the next day, when he returned to Timely, the art staff would be told that they were being "let go." The time of plenty of the '40s, when comics like *Captain Marvel* were published bi-weekly, was over. If he hadn't obtained the freelance work, he would have been without any income. Yet it was not *this* wholesale cutback of personnel that was to affect Colan. He was still single, and the instability of any certainty that one would have work the next day, an income the next week, had yet to scar him.

He drew a private eye strip called *Shannon,* and some *Blackhawk* stories for Quality Comics; he also did work for St. John Publications during this time.

Colan married and began a family as the '50s progressed, and now it became more important that work remain steady, that he be able to provide for his family.

He landed the job of illustrating *Hopalong Cassidy* at DC. The series had just switched over from Fawcett Comics in 1952, who were withdrawing from the comics field and concentrating on magazines. Not only had Fawcett been faced with a declining comics readership, but DC had kept up expensive lawsuits over *Captain Marvel,* complaining that the character was an infringement on *Superman.* DC took over some of the Fawcett titles, the most popular being the Cassidy strip.

"The artist had no leewey," Colan recalls of the series. "He wasn't even allowed to sign his name to the stories. Each panel was written out. I felt like a student when I was finished because I would come in with the work, and I would show it to the editor, and he would go over it. He sat there with a blue pencil to mark up what he didn't like, and what he did like, and so forth. And then there would be some changes made. It was very difficult to make a living. Sometimes I would be held down there for a whole day, making changes. And I couldn't stand changes because I always gave it my best shot the first time around," he says, with conviction, like Gary Cooper making a simple statement in *High Noon.*

"I was new. I was young. You've got to be made of pretty hard stuff to combat that. The changes made the product worse, because when I worked on it I gave it my best, and I couldn't give it *more* than my best!"

He finally left DC, and began illustrating war stories for Stan Lee at Timely Comics.

"The word came out," he recalls, with a hint of the horror of those times, "that there was going to be a big fold-up. Artists better start looking around for work elsewhere and there was really no other place I could go. The whole bottom dropped out and I was literally out of work. They had a distribution problem, they couldn't get their books distributed so the company just about folded."

Comic books were now subject to open attack. William Gaines and EC comics were under seige. Critics claimed that comic books led children to juvenile delinquency. Others intimated that comics were part of a Communist plot to undermine American youth. Public comic book burnings took place.

"Stan hung in by the skin of his teeth," Colan recalls. "He literally turned books out of a closet. He and Jack Kirby were a one-man army. I couldn't get a thing out of Stan. I'd call him from time-to-time and he'd say, 'I'm sorry, the situation hasn't changed.' I was traumatized. I had a home, a family, and that marriage was on the skids besides. I didn't know where to go. So, I started to work up samples on things other than comics. I thought the next best thing would be advertising art."

He managed to get a job with Merrill

Anderson, an agency that did banking advertising. He missed being able to tell a story, to create continuity, but he gave the work his best, the same way he had in comics.

He underwent a divorce, and lost his job at Merrill Anderson when he asked for a raise. In the midst of such traumatic events, it was difficult to find the energy required for creation.

He began working for Paul Sherry Studios, drawing film strips for education films that would be used in schools. Paul Sherry did not want Colan's sophisticated artstyle, however. They required him, oftentimes, to draw scenes with stick figures, and would correct him when he tried to embellish a drawing.

At about this time, he went for a vacation in the Poconos Mountains, where he met Adrienne. She was on vacation also.

"It was really incredible," Adrienne Colan recounts, with romantic enthusiasm. "I had told my parents, since the day they took me to see *West Side Story*, that I was so impressed by the love of Tony and Maria, and how they met at this dance, and when they met she was at one side of the room and he was at the other and it was as if everybody else just faded away. I was working as an Executive Secretary at Saks Fifth Avenue and went on a singles weekend up to the Poconos. It seemed that after dinner everybody congregated on this beautiful flagstone patio and, within seconds, everyone coupled off, and there was literally Gene and me, and we came together, and we hit it off immediately. Within three months we were engaged, within six months we were married."

Adrienne becomes adamant when she speaks about the work Gene had to do for Paul Sherry studios, the stick figures that denied his true ambition and talent. She encouraged him to quit, to risk facing starvation. She promised him they would survive.

He managed to get one big 30-page job...from Dell Comics doing *Ben Casey*. By the time he was finished, Adrienne was pregnant, and he did not have the money for train fare (15¢ at the time) to deliver the artwork to the city. Feeling guilty, he had to take 15 pennies from his daughter's piggybank so that he could take the train and hopefully pick up a check. Fortunately, they paid him upon delivery.

It was the only work he had from Dell, but now (1963) Marvel Comics was beginning to open up. He managed to get one job at a time from them. There was still no real certainty from job to job as late as 1964. He also did work for Archie Goodwin when he edited the Warren line of magazines.

The first jobs he did for Marvel during this time were under the pen name of Adam Austin. "I was afraid because I was working for two companies and I didn't want any conflict," Colan explains. "But there was no problem. Stan wanted me to come over to Marvel and he made it financially possible for me to do so." He doesn't remember where the name Adam Austin came from.

Like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, Colan drew a number of stories from brief synopses from Stan Lee. The pacing, detail and incident were often left up to the artist and each man approached it from his own personal viewpoint.

"I've always felt that you're only as good as your last job," Colan reflects. "And you're always on the line, every new job that comes along. So long as you can produce, you're in demand."

Although he always found the business a difficult one (albeit enjoyable) one, some of his fondest memories come from those early days at Marvel, because he was able to create much of the story and the way to tell it, a responsibility he had not had before.

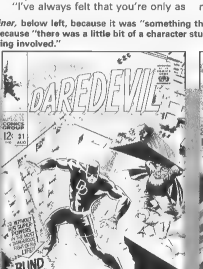
"There was a time when I worked for Stan that was pretty easy because he gave me very little story," he recalls. "It was just a smattering of a story, as a matter of fact. He would just talk to me on the telephone, and he would give me a vague outline of what he would want that wouldn't take up more than half a page for a 20-page story. The rest was up to me.

"I recorded it on the phone, and would just play back the recording and break it down in my mind. And then whatever I had, he would put in the dialogue to go with it. It left a lot up to me. That's how he turned out so many titles. He didn't sit down and write lengthy scripts."

Colan recalls a story he drew that was heavily influenced by the motion picture *Bullitt*. Whenever he recounts this tale, he always states that it occurred in a *Captain America* story, but in actuality it happened in *Daredevil*. (The only reason I remember it so vividly is that I was sent xeroxes of those pages to see if I could script a comic, and from there became a proofreader at Marvel Comics.)

"I remember a particular incident that Stan had dictated a *Captain America* story to me, and I had just seen the film *Bullitt*. I devoted too much space to this car chase, and Stan

**Colan said he couldn't relate to the *Sub-Mariner*, below left, because it was "something that might have come out of the Roman empire." *Daredevil*, middle, was interesting because "there was a little bit of a character study to work with." *Iron Man* was fun for him since "there wasn't a hell of a lot of writing involved."**



says, 'What are you trying to do here? You've got four or five pages of nothing but cars chasing each other. What is this? We've only got an 18-page story here, what happens to the story?' But he left it in. He didn't chop it out. He would just tell me not to do it. He tried to direct me in a very nice way. I never had any trouble with Stan.

"There are certain strips you can relate to," he reveals, "and other strips you can't. I like contemporary stories rather than things dealing with the future. I do like stories that are on a one-to-one basis, a story that has a lot of atmosphere, where you can get a real character study. But in most of the stories I dealt with a lot of superheroes, crowds, and there's too much, you can't get into it. I find it difficult to get into the story-telling, because there's not much chance to *tell* the story."

One of the stories he recalls most vividly, oddly enough, is a black-and-white horror story from the '70s called "The Hero Killer Principle," featuring Hodiah Twist.

"It was a big surprise to me when I read it, because I didn't expect to happen what happened. It was the first time that I can ever remember really being startled in a horror story. I've done lots of horror stories, but they were always predictable. This was not predictable. I like to be surprised. And it rang true," he says.

Colan has always been a fan of horror stories, and when the decision was announced that Marvel comics would produce a comic book about Dracula, he wanted to do it immediately.

"I have never come upon any actor who has ever picked up on any of my things. I've been doing *Dracula* for years and it's hard to believe that not once did Christopher Lee ever pick up an issue and just glance it through. Or that Jack Palance never picked up an issue.

"I fashioned my Dracula character after Palance," he reveals, quietly, "long before he did it on television. At the time, I was trying to get that story to do for Stan, but what I didn't know was that he had already promised *Dracula* to Bill Everett. When I heard that he had decided to give it to Bill Everett, I blew a fuse. On the phone, I said, 'What do you mean? You promised [the series] to me!' He said, 'Well, Gene, I did promise Bill, how can I back out?' But I said, 'But, Stan, you told me I could have it!' And he said, 'I just can't. Bill's been after me for a long time.' "

Adrienne convinced him to draw up a sample sheet on *Dracula;* that if he wanted the series badly enough, he should be willing to audition for it.

He drew the sample page and sent it in to Stan.

"The very next day I heard from Stan. He said, 'It's yours.' He didn't even bother saying hello."

Shortly after Colan began drawing *Dracula,* he was teamed with inker Tom Palmer, thus producing some of the best art of the '70s. Working with writer Marv Wolfman, the three set a Marvel record for most consecutive issues with the same creative team. A record unmatched since then.

His reasons for wanting to do *Dracula* stem from his childhood terror of such film monsters as *Frankenstein.*

"I like horror stories done in good taste," he claims. "The first horror thing I ever saw was *Frankenstein,* and it absolutely wrecked my life! I couldn't believe what I was seeing on the screen. I couldn't equate the fact that it was a movie . . . that (Karloff) was a real person, a real human being . . . I never saw anything as ugly or as big as that . . . and it's supposed to be dead or not dead." He gives a shudder in honor of the little boy who sat in the darkened movie theater. "I was a very young child, and I couldn't believe such a thing could be. After *Frankenstein,* my folks wouldn't let me go to see films like that because it was murder on the household. I couldn't sleep at night; I kept them up.

"But I was drawn to horror movies . . . like a fly to flypaper," he says, with excitement that reflects his enthusiasm today. "I would have to work up the guts to go in, and *never alone!* I would sooner pee in my pants than go to the bathroom if I would go to a show like that for fear that I would be caught somewhere along the way and strangled!"

He recounts a real life experience he had as a child, about the time he first saw a corpse, and he does it with a definite flair, acting out the parts of his cousin and himself, at times doing a fair imitation of Lon Chaney, Jr. as Lenny in *Of Mice And Men.*

"I don't remember how old I was, maybe 10," he says, "and it was on an Easter vacation that I generally took to Strasberg, Pennsylvania, to see my cousin. He had a dog, and I love dogs. I heard that a friend of theirs had passed away. My cousin's family were going to visit the corpse. Pay their respects to the deceased's family. And I wanted to go, but they knew how traumatized I would get with anything like that, and they didn't want to upset me or upset *them,* so they told me to

**Colan's short stint on *Captain America,* below left, was fun but when it came to all out superhero action, he wasn't thrilled such as his two short stays on *The Avengers.* He had two much more productive stints on *Dr. Strange* but in the end, "I sort of got played out with Dr. Strange."**

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"I think that *Wonder Woman* (left) has the potential of being a good strip," Colan states. "I felt that there was not enough character to her. Does she cry? Does she have feelings? It repeats itself all the time." He prefers doing a more moody title like *Batman*, below. His current favorites are *Regamuffins*, below left, which he does with author McGregor. "It's real, you get into the people. It's just a completely different ballgame," he says. *Night Force*, bottom right, is also preferable to "long underwear" types.

FORGOTTEN ME THAT QUICKLY? MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK TO LIVE AT HOME!
MABTER DICK!
DON'T BE SILLY, DICK IT'S SIMPLY THAT I HAVEN'T GOTTEN USED TO THE ECHOES OF THE BAT AGAIN.
IRROOMM
YOUR CYCLE SOUNDED ALMOST LIKE ALMOST GHOSTS.

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PHOTO BY BRIAN LYNCH

**Author McGregor and Colan.**

stay back with my cousin, who took care of me while they went out.

"So, while they were gone I talked him into taking me over to see it."

His cousin tried to warn him against it.

" 'Don't go. You're going to get in trouble.' And I said, 'Nah! It won't bother me. I'd love to see a corpse, I've never seen a corpse before.' So he took me. It was only a block away. He took me around to the side of the house, and the corpse was butted up, right against the window. I couldn't believe it. I was frozen to the spot! I couldn't move!

"And needless to say I upset the entire family for the rest of the vacation."

He is still attracted to horror films, though they don't have such an extreme effect on him these days. He can laugh about the boy who was frightened by a corpse on the other side of a pane of glass, and yet still understand the fright.

After some highly publicized problems at Marvel, about a year and a half ago, Colan was signed to a contract at DC Comics. He was immediately assigned a book that seemed a natural: *Batman*. He was also given *Wonder Woman* as they tried to give the title and character a face-lift. Colan also tackled a four-issue mini-series about The Phantom Zone that re-teamed him with writer Steve Gerber.

Just recently, Colan began working with Mary Wolfman again. The two are the creative team on *Night Force*, DC's new supernatural title that Colan has spoken enthusiastically about.

With just a year under his belt at DC, Colan reflects, "DC is wonderful to work for. They leave you pretty much to yourself; they accept everything you do and that's great. I love them for that. Everyone working there is strictly professional. The important in this business to be left alone."

He'd like to do other kinds of stories than superheroes, having had a lifetime of cavorting supersuits bashing out each other's brains.

"I'd like to get into a serious story, either a very good mystery or a very down to earth story," he states, with sincerity.

He likes drawing a strip like *Ragamuffins* for *Eclipse* magazine, which concerns kids growing up in the 1950s. Many of the walls in his home have framed charcoals and paintings of his own, portraits and action shots of his own kids growing up, one of his daughter asleep, another of the kids sliding down a treelined snowbank. They are beautifully detailed, exquisitely rendered pieces, that catch not only the moment of his children's childhood, but something of the memory of his own, and further, something of the innocence and joy that, given a chance, can be a part of any childhood.

"I'd like to get away from superheroes. I'd like to get into just plain story-telling. I'd like to tell a story once, and then move on to another thing, each story be a challenge in itself, but not going back and repeating what you've already done. I think that authors in my field should come up with stories that are complete, and that there should be a teamup between artists and writers who are suited for each other. If it's a story that takes place 2,000 years from now let them select an artist who is good for it; for a serious present day story, I would be good for it. I'd love to do a Western, that would be no trouble." He has a framed charcoal illustration in his bathroom depicting a stagecoach with horses running full out, dust rolling up from the blurring wheels. "I wouldn't want to do stories much farther back than that though. But there are very few human touches in comics. And when you do find them, they are very unique."

As long as Gene Colan continues to lend his pencil to the comics, to depict real people, whether they are dressed in long johns or Dracula's cape, he will give the comics not only a touch of class, but of humanity, of real people who may have to utter plastic dialogue but whose features will reflect flesh and blood. His characters will hurt or feel joy, but they will also show the subtler range of human reactions in between.

And if the medium loses him, it will lose an artist who enhances its public and cultural image. The uninitiates who view the medium with disdain will have difficulty disregarding his work, for it is not in the simplistic, crude approach so often associated with comics.

With talents like Gene Colan, the medium is elevated in status, and one day, perhaps, will attain appreciation as the artform it sometimes can be. ■

**His longest run has been on *Dracula* with writer Marv Wolfman and Colan feels, "That was how Dracula should have been." Colan always enjoyed the manic events in *Howard the Duck*, center. Another look at Colan's storytelling using the Batman, below right.**

ART BY GENE COLAN AND TOM PALMER

ART © 1982 DC COMICS INC

# Inking

**JANSON:** I think it really comes down to the stage of development. Five years ago I would have felt more obligated to follow what he is doing but now I don't feel that obligated. I feel I have a batter idea of what I want to do and how I want to tell the story. So I would tend to do what I felt was the right thing to do.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Well, what about if you're handed John Buscema, or Ross Andru, or Gene Colan, do you keep it looking like Buscema, Andru or Colan? I think much of a genius Alfredo Alcala is, I resent the fact that he changes everything to look the same. I'm wondering how various inkers alter their styles to fit or compromise. You know, 'Wow, I'd never stick a black there but Frank really wants one there.'

**JANSON:** It's definitely a process of compromise. I don't know if Alfredo Alcala has a choice anymore. I don't know if he can pull back, away from his style anymore.

**RUBINSTEIN:** I think it's almost a feeling of contempt for the penciller, I don't keep looking like his pencils.

**JANSON:** That's a pretty intense thing to say.

**RUBINSTEIN:** I know someone who used to ink Walt Simonson's pencils and he detested them so he changed them so they would look like everything else he did. I asked why and he said, 'Walt doesn't draw that well.' Well, Walt's a magnificent designer and the guy was so short sighted in what he was doing. So I think, Bob and I were taught by Dick and one of the things Dick emphasized is, use an angular line for Irv Novick and an angular line for Neal Adams, and change your stuff depending upon the penciller.

I don't think the Philippinos ever considered changing the way their stuff looks.

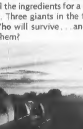
**LAYTON:** You did *Daredevil* for a long time after a variety of different pencillers and there's still a really enjoyable consistency to all of them in the sense that it was Bob Brown or Gil Kane or whatever. There was still this look and I know they felt it was the same way on *Iron Man*. They wanted me to stay on it because there was a certain look.

A lot of the time, *Daredevil* has been as much your book as it has been anybody's, and the look has been the same regardless of who the penciller is. I had the same with *Iron Man*. I have tried to make the pencillers look consistent. Also, that's the thing that sells comics, the fact that it looks the same every issue. That's something that people want to see, they don't want to see different interpretations every issue.


## This Month In FANGORIA

### LANDIS MEETS CARPENTER MEETS CRONENBERG!

As a special exclusive, through the courtesy of Mick Garris of Universal Pictures, FANGORIA brings you an awesome panel discussion entitled "Fear On Film" whose participants include none other than John Landis, John Carpenter and David Cronenberg. These three new titans of terror will discuss in detail the ingredients for a successful horror film. Three giants in the field all at one dais! Who will survive . . . and what will be left of them?



As this issue will hit the stands in May, a spectacular futuristic action film will be opening in theaters. *The Road Warrior* is the sequel to *Mad Max* and it may very well be described as Australia's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. These two Mad Max films are by far and away the most successful movies in the history of the Australian film industry and we will provide an exciting, behind-the-scenes glimpse of the current nail-biting Mad Max adventure with a talk with producer/stunt driver/sound man Byron Kennedy. Get a special preview of what may be the next American box-office smash.

The revival of 3D horror will also be featured in this jam-packed issue. Exclusive interviews with Charles Band, the producer-director of *Parasite*, and Earl Owensby, the North Carolinan maverick who has made the killer-dog tale *Rottweiler*, will show you what three dimensional terrors lay before you. And following up on previous on-location reports, Uncle Bob Martin will let you in on his visits to the sets of John Carpenter's *The Thing* (in far-flung, ice-bound British Columbia) and George Romero's *Creepshow* (in exotic Pittsburgh).

And still there'll be more! Backing up these fabulous features will be interviews with young makeup whiz Greg Cannom; Paul Clemens, star of *The Beast Within*; a Val Lewton retrospective to commemorate the current remake of *The Cat People*; and a talk with Roger Corman standby Dick Miller whose on screen exploits have ranged from *It Conquered the World* to *Little Shop of Horrors* to *The Howling*!

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## Ed. Notes

# Comics That Move

Animation is as much a part of the world of comics as are the costumed superheroes. In fact, many superheroes have been translated into cartoons, from *Superman* to *Spider-Man*—the best of the old and (perhaps) the best of the new.

The *Superman* cartoons I refer to are of course the classic series produced by Max Fleischer's studio. They were state-of-the-art in the 40s and they stand up well with what's being produced today. The Fleischer cartoons were made to be shown in movie theaters and with the adult audience in mind. And they appealed to movie-goers of all ages.

Before *Superman*, Fleischer produced the original, unbeatable *Popeye* cartoons. These were also intended for cinematic showing and had a following that cut across age barriers. (Generations of Americans ate their spinach knowing—or at least having a vague feeling in the back of their minds—that not only was it good for you but it would make you strong. My mother believed it. I believed it . . . even though I was obviously an exception.)

Fleischer also gave us *Betty Boop, Koko the Clown* and *Out of the Inkwell*. He was the most creative, most innovative, single greatest force in the history of animation. And he was put out of business by the man whose talents ran a close second, Walt Disney.

And hopefully, this year and over the next couple of years, we'll again be treated to superior full-length animated films. (See "Word Balloons" on page 4 for a run-down of what's coming up.) First and foremost, my concern is for the quality of the story. And it's not just the choice of good material—it's the way that material is treated. (Witness Ralph Bakshi's treatment of Tolkien.) Both *NIMH* and *Black Cauldron* look very promising, but time will tell.

* * *

TV animation has always been the poor stepchild of the field. And over the past 10 years, the quality has dropped steadily and depressingly—with only a few bright spots here and there.

The best animation on TV today, without question, is presented in 20, 30, 40 or 60-second spurts. That's right, it's the *commercials*. And ironically many of the better ones are shown on some of the more boring Saturday morning cartoon shows. Maybe that explains the nose-diving ratings: the kids have gotten tired of sitting through 10 minutes of inane plot, cardboard characters and flat pictures, just to be entertained for a mere 30 or 60 seconds of spectacular animation. The problem, to a great degree, is economic. The budget for a 60-second commercial can easily exceed the budget for the animated show on which it airs.

I don't know the answer to this problem. Perhaps it would be best if the networks simply ran the old Disney and Fleischer cartoons and let it go at that. Then the audience would see quality animation, entertaining programming, and a special something that even a Levi's Jeans commercials doesn't have.

Howard Zimmerman/Editor-in-Chief

## To Be Continued...

**CAMELOT 3000:** We've been mentioning this DC title for months now and just as our next issue comes out, the comic will finally premiere. Written by Mike W. Barr and pencilled by Britain's Brian Bolland, the story is set in the future and introduces us to a new version of Camelot. The book will also be introducing a new format for DC and next issue we'll be talking to all concerned.

**MAX ALLAN COLLINS** scripts *Dick Tracy* and *Ms. Tree*, writes the *Nolan* novels and has time for one or two other projects. Dave McDonnell teamed up with Kim "Howard" Johnson to bring us a profile of this prolific and talented creator.

**DIRECT SALES:** It's a term bandied about by both professionals and fans as the savior of comics. Few truly understand how the direct-sale only system came about and what it truly means to both creator and reader. Next issue will shed some light on this important facet of the business.

**PLUS** Martin Pasko, animation and comics scripter, enters the Guest Spot for some observations on the business today . . . Part Two of our Inker's Forum continues with a cameo appearance by Jack Abel and more jokes . . . Ron Goulart returns with a profile of *Captain Easy* . . . Hembeck is back with a full page Comics Commentary

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